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# Speech AND Manners.



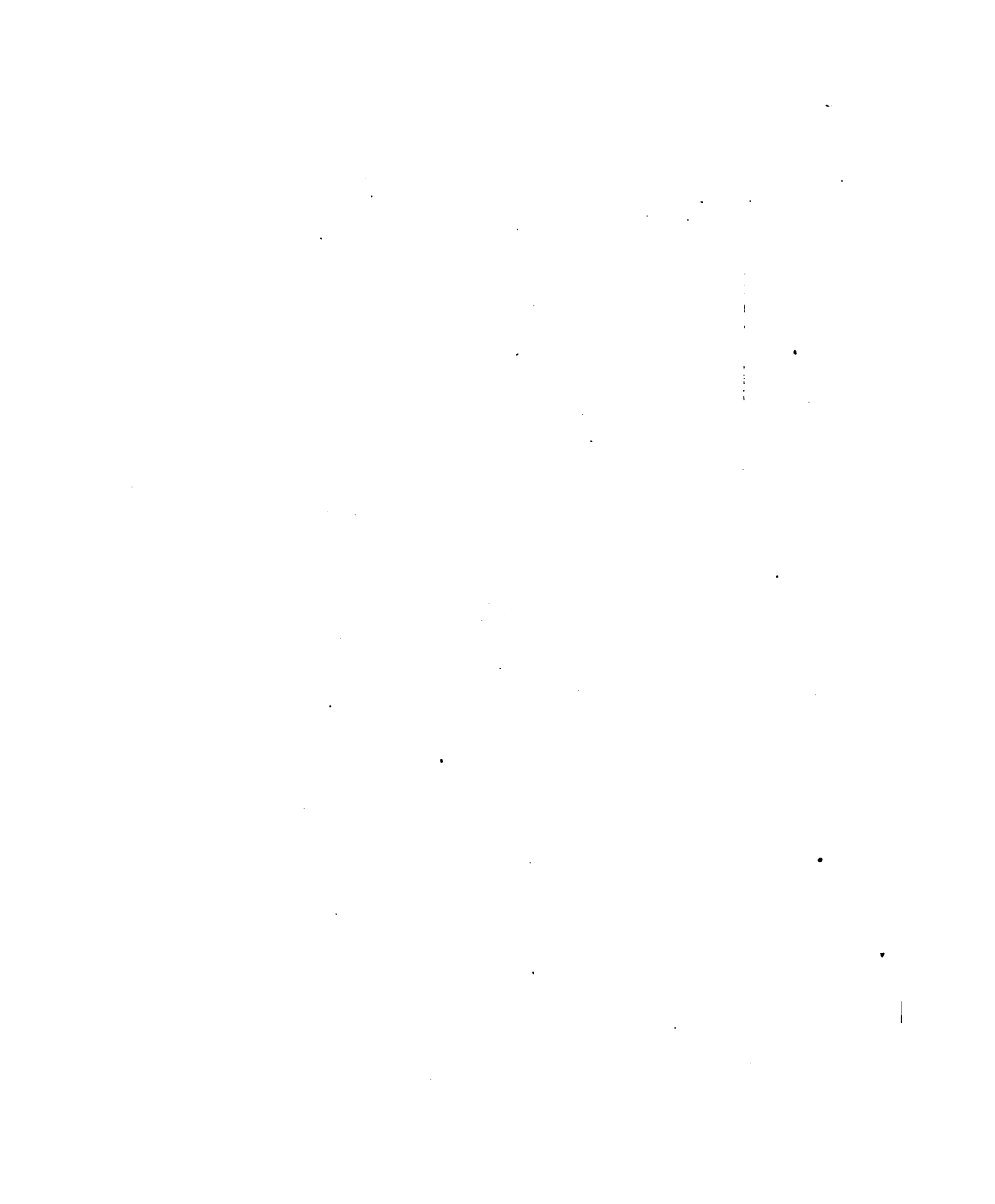




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# SPEECH AND MANNERS

FOR

## HOME AND SCHOOL.

BY

Miss E. S. KIRKLAND,

*Author of "Six Little Cooks," "Dora's Housekeeping," "Short History of France," etc.*

Some words on Language may be well applied,  
And take them kindly, though they touch your pride.  
Words lead to things. \* \* \* \* \*  
Though books on manners are not out of print,  
An honest tongue may drop a harmless hint.

—O. W. HOLMES.

CHICAGO:

JANSEN, McCLURG, & COMPANY.

1884.

2012 f. 2

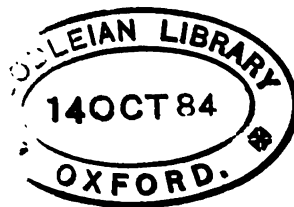
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TO  
ALL WHO WISH TO TEACH—  
OR  
TO LEARN.

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## PREFACE.

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THIS little book does not pretend to exhaust the far-reaching topics of which it treats. It is merely a collection of detached hints—a photographic reproduction of certain parts of school-teaching; and, as photographs are not often interesting except to the friends of their subjects, we can hope for readers only among those who see in themselves room for improvement. If the book succeeds in calling the attention of young people whose habits of speech are now taking form, to the errors to which their ears are, unfortunately, well accustomed, it will do all that is expected of it.

Some difficulty has been found in keeping the more serious parts of education sufficiently out of sight, as not being within the scope of the work. The disposition of the teacher is to teach everything at once, and one has to keep constantly in mind the self-caution of Dr. Holmes:

Much I could tell you that you know too well;  
Much I remember—but I will not tell.

No apology is offered for the use of abbreviations. Since

"don't," "isn't," "I'll," and so on, are used in familiar conversation among speakers of the best English, they can not be out of place in family talk, which, indeed, would sound to most persons affected and stilted without them. The little fishes should not talk like whales, and the whales must learn to speak low if they wish to converse profitably with the minnows.

The author invites those whose interest in the subject of correct speech is equal to her own, to bring to her notice any errors or omissions which may impair the value of the book, that all such mistakes may be corrected when (not if!) it comes to a second edition.

275 HURON STREET, CHICAGO.

*July, 1883.*

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Now wol I pray mekely ebery person discrete, that redeth or hereth this lytil tretise to have my rude entending excused, and my superflui e of wordes, for two causes. The first cause is, for that curions enditing and harde sentences is ful hely at ones for a childe to lerne. And the secunde cause is this, that sothely me semeth better to foriten unto a child thise a gode sentence that he foriete (forget) it ones.

Chaucer.

# SPEECH AND MANNERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HOW DO YOU DO ?

We are willing, we are ready;  
We would learn if you would teach.

\* \* \*  
Look into our childish faces;  
See you not our willing hearts?  
Only love us—only lead us,  
And we all will do our parts.

MARY HOWITT.

THERE are three little girls on one side of the table, and two little girls and a boy on the other side. At one end sits a middle-aged lady, and at the other her daughter Laura, who is almost fifteen years old and very tall for her age.

Now you have seen the family seated around the tea-table, and can assign to each such a face as may best suit your fancy. However, to do that you must know their names, or there will be a fine jumble. You might put Julia's head on Emily's shoulders, and give Elsie,



who is pale and slender, the features of Ruth, a little rosy chub. That would never do, so we will guard against it at the beginning.

At Mrs. Vincent's right hand sits the youngest of the party, Ruth Forrest, only nine years old last birthday. Rather young to be away from home, you think. Perhaps so; but her mother has been obliged to go away for somebody's health, and thought that Ruth would be better off at Turnbridge than travelling about or living in hotels.

Next to this little person come The Twins—Marion and Elsie Brooks—who are about twelve. I'm quite sure you couldn't tell them apart, because no one else can. They are rather thin and pale, and Mrs. Vincent once said she should try to fatten one of them so as to distinguish her from the other; but though one did grow quite plump while she stayed at Turnbridge, the mischief was that the other did exactly the same, so their friends were as badly off as ever. They are dressed precisely alike, their ribbon-bows have just the same slant, and their hair makes just the same waves in just the same places. Really, those twins might be called a regular puzzle.

Now we will pass over Laura and come to Julia Featherly, who sits at her right. Poor Julia! She has not been very carefully brought up, and her friends have allowed her to become round-shouldered, while her movements are so awkward and her looks so uncouth that it is rather hard for an ill-mannered person to keep from laughing at her. Among other unpleasant habits, she has one of constantly handling the long curls that hang over her shoulders, which annoys Laura so much that she telegraphs to her mother by a look, "*What shall I do about it?*" and her mother answers in the same way, with a shake of the head, so slight that no one else would have noticed it, "*Nothing, just now.*"

Next to Julia sits Emily Greenwood, who is a year younger than she, being not quite thirteen. A greater contrast can hardly be imagined. You can see, the moment you look at Emily, that she has been most carefully instructed, and that she remembers all her mother's good words almost without an effort. She sits perfectly upright, neither lolling back in her chair nor leaning against the table, and when her awkward neighbor spills half a glass of water on the table-cloth between them, Emily does not turn round and look at her, nor

utter an exclamation, but sits quite still while the servant sops up the spreading liquid with a napkin. Decidedly, she is a "well-brought-up" girl.

Those of you who have read "Dora's Housekeeping" have met Emily before, under the name of "Milly." Now that she is older she has outgrown the nickname, and was introduced at school under her real name. Possibly our old friend Dora, grown to be a young lady, may make her appearance before we finish our story.

We come now to the last of the group, Ralph Norris, Mrs. Vincent's nephew, a ten-year-old boy who looks just about as such boys generally do. At least, I think they all look alike, though I suppose their mothers see differences between them. Ralph is the very soul of good-nature; always in mischief without intending it, taking reproof with the utmost sweetness and then—doing the same thing over again with no better reason than—"Oh, I forgot!" Ralph has a very short memory.

You will naturally ask how all these young people happen to be gathered together around the same table. Is it a visit? No, it is not a visit. Perhaps this is a boarding-school? Not exactly; but it is part of a day-school, and Mrs. Vincent has taken into her family a few

of the pupils who live too far off to come every day. The children are mostly strangers to each other and to their hostess, and are busy in getting acquainted in a silent sort of way with their eyes, saying very little unless some one asks them a question.

Now that all are introduced we will go on with our narrative.

"You may take that plate into the pantry and bring another one for Miss Laura," said Mrs. Vincent when Mary, the waiter, brought Ralph his plate of chicken and was going to return the one before him to the carver.

"Why, it's clean, Aunt Fanny," said Ralph, wonderingly.

"Not now," answered Mrs. Vincent.

"Why, yes'm, it is," persisted Ralph. "I'm *sure* it's just as nice as the others."

"It was when you sat down," said his aunt, "but don't you know you have been handling it all the while we have been at table?"

"Have I? I didn't know that was any harm," said Ralph with a profoundly innocent air.

"It doesn't break the plate, if that is what you mean by harm," replied his aunt, "but the idea of another

person's eating from it afterward is disagreeable. My dear boy! Don't you see that at this very instant, while I am talking to you, you are feeling round the inside of your tumbler with your fingers?"

"Oh, I forgot," said Ralph, taking out his hand. "Mother told me she hoped I'd learn some manners before I came home."

Just then Mary came in with a purse which had been found in the hall. "Who dropped this?" asked Mrs. Vincent.

"It was me!" cried Ruth, eagerly holding out her hand for her property.

"*Who* did you say dropped it, Ruth?" said Mrs. Vincent.

"Why, I did, of course," said the little girl. "Did you think I didn't?"

"Not at all, but you said *me* did it, as I understood."

"Oh, no; I meant *I* did it, but it was *me* that dropped it."

"Unless you can say 'me did it' you mustn't say 'it was me,'" said Mrs. Vincent. "Will you try to remember?"

"Yes'm, but I don't see why not."

"When you study grammar you will see why not, but you must try to form the habit of speaking correctly now, and learn the reason afterward. That is the way we have all had to do."

"I'd like some butter," said Ralph, without addressing anybody in particular. The butter happened to be near Elsie, who was talking and did not notice the remark.

"I'd like some butter, please," repeated Ralph, in a somewhat louder tone.

"To whom are you speaking, Ralph?" asked his aunt.

"Why, to any one that has the butter. It's nearest to Elsie."

"That is not a proper way of asking for anything at the table. Mention some one by name when you speak. And when Mary is in the room don't give any one at the table the trouble of passing things to you, but ask her for them. You remind me of a person at whose house I was staying when I was a little girl, who always made known his wants by giving three loud knocks on the table with his knife-handle, saying at the same time, 'Bread!' 'Potatoes!' or naming whatever else he happened to want. I don't wish you to be like him!"

You are not to suppose, my dear young readers, because I tell only of the mistakes made by Mrs. Vincent's pupils, that these mistakes furnished the main topic of conversation among them, or that there was no other talk going on in her family except what is here set down. But if I were to try to tell all that was said there, instead of one little book we should have a library, or at least a series as long as the Waverley novels and not nearly as interesting. So you must imagine many other sayings, some witty, some foolish, some wise, some otherwise, some practical, some poetical, and, I regret to say, a vast number ungrammatical, of which we have room for only a few specimens. Possibly you may recognize some of the mistakes as those you have heard before.

Now we hope you are at least slightly acquainted with the little company, and as it is growing late we will let them retire for the night, for several of them have been travelling and are quite ready for bed.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

The schoolmaster is abroad! And I trust more to him, armed with his primer, than I do to the soldier in full military array.

LORD BROUGHAM.

"Did you ever study grammar?" asked Laura of her left-hand neighbor in the course of some talk at the breakfast table.

"I've studied it some," answered Marion.

Mrs. Vincent's quick ears took the alarm.

"You should say, 'I've studied it a little,' or 'some-what,' my dear," said she. "'Some' is an adjective, and can not be used to modify a verb. I have heard people say 'I liked it some better,' or 'she goes there some,' but all such expressions are incorrect."

"I didn't study it but one term," answered Marion, "and I don't know as it did me much good."

"I shall have to begin teaching before we go into the class," said Mrs. Vincent, laughing. "You should say, 'I don't know *that* it did me much good,' not 'as,' be-



cause 'that' is the proper conjunction to use there; and when you say you didn't study it but one term, you mean you studied it only one term, don't you?"

"Yes'm."

"Then 'but' means the same as 'only,' and you can see that it would not be the same thing to say you did do a thing and you did not do a thing. If you *did* study it but one term, don't say that you *didn't* study it but one term."

Marion looked puzzled and only half satisfied; but her teacher thought that since the idea had been introduced into her mind it might be allowed to rest awhile, and would "work itself clear" later. Soon afterward, Ralph, who had been excused from the table, came in with the mail, slowly spelling over the writing on a postal card.

"'I shall be in'—— what's that next word, Aunt Fanny? I can't make it out."

"Is that card addressed to you, my dear?" asked his aunt.

"No, ma'am; I guess it's for one of the twins."

"Then you shouldn't read it. The person who brings in the letters should do nothing but hand each one to its owner."

"Why, I thought anybody could read a postal card. Father says they're public property."

"It would be perfectly right for your father to read a card directed to one of his children, but it is quite another thing to read what does not concern you in any way, and I think it very rude to read other people's cards except in the case of the nearest relatives. I don't say it was very rude in you, because you are only a little boy and haven't learned all you will know when you are a man; but I hope you will remember when you grow up that it is not well-bred to indulge your curiosity about such things. I know gentlemen who have such a sense of honor that they carefully refrain from even reading the address of any letter given them to mail, only glancing at it to see if it is stamped and sealed."

"They must be funny men," said Ruth.

"I don't call them funny—only thoroughly refined. Well, Elsie, you look as if your card had brought you good news."

"Papa says he is going to pass through here on Friday, and will stop and see us. Just think! It won't be but one day before we shall see him!"

"It *will* be but one day, you mean," observed Marion.

"That is right, Marion," exclaimed Mrs. Vincent; "I'm glad you take so much notice. I thought you would understand very soon."

"I don't understand," said Marion, "but I remember."

"That's a good beginning," answered her teacher, "and I've no doubt that the understanding will come in the course of time."

"Can I go and sort over my things before school, Mrs. Vincent?" said Julia. "It won't take but a minute."

"*Will* take but a minute," murmured Marion under her breath.

"We was in such a hurry when I come away that I don't seem to rightly know where nothing is," remarked Julia as she left the room.

The moment the door was closed Laura burst out laughing.

"My dear Laura," said Mrs. Vincent very gravely, "if I could only make you realize how much worse your conduct is than anything that Julia has done I should feel that I had accomplished something worth doing."

"But, mamma, she was so excessively funny!"

"Is that any reason for your being unfeeling and ill-

bred? You should never laugh aloud the moment any one has left the room if you can possibly avoid it, for fear of hurting her feelings, especially if it is a stranger or an inferior. The instinct of true politeness will make you careful not even to run any risk."

The day was bright and clear, and when Mrs. Vincent took her place on the platform of the large school-room she had the pleasure of looking over well-filled rows of seats. After the morning exercises she made a little address to the pupils assembled, as was her custom on such occasions, and among other things said she had a new plan to propose.

"You know there are societies for all sorts of things," said she. "Suppose we form ourselves into a 'Society for the Promotion of Speaking good English.' Shall we? Those who are in favor of this may raise their right hands."

Of course most of the right hands went up; and Rose Grayson, who sat in one of the front desks, observed, "My mother says she cares more to have me speak good grammar than anything else."

"Do you know," said Mrs. Vincent with a smile, "that people say now-a-days that we should not talk

about 'good grammar,' any more than about 'good arithmetic,' or 'good geography' ? Each of these things is good in itself, and people's misusing it doesn't make it bad. What is the definition of grammar?"

"The art of speaking and writing a language correctly," answered Rose promptly.

"Then it must be good, must it not?"

"Yes; but what else can you say?"

"Who can tell?" asked Mrs. Vincent.

Two or three hands were held up, and having permission to speak the owners answered variously, "good English," "correct English," and "speaking properly."

"Those are all good," said Mrs. Vincent, "but 'good English' is the shortest and simplest, so we will keep that as the name of our society. Who can remember any common instances of bad English?"

The girls thought a few minutes, and then one said: "When you say, 'I was laying down,' instead of, 'I was lying down.'"

"Yes, that is very common. Why is it wrong?"

"Because lying is in the present tense and laying is in the past."

"Is that right?"

A general "no" arose, but the reason why did not seem to be forthcoming.

"Try, now, and see if any one can tell me why the expression is not correct."

"Because you lay something else down, but you lie down yourself," said one.

"That is an illustration, but it is not a reason. The verb 'To lie' is intransitive, and the verb 'To lay' is transitive and requires an object after it. You lie down yourself; you lay a book down on the table. But what would you say if you wished to express the past tense in the simple form, using only one word?"

"I laid down," answered several voices.

"Laid down what?"

"Laid down on the bed."

"But if you say laid, you must say what you laid. Was it a baby, or a handkerchief, or a pillow that you laid on the bed?"

"Why, I just laid there myself."

"You 'lay' there yourself, or you 'laid' yourself down upon the bed. In this case, 'yourself' becomes the object of the verb. Does any one remember a line of poetry where this form is used, only having 'myself' shortened to 'me'?"

" 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' " suggested Ruth.

" Oh, yes," said some of the older girls. " Why didn't we think of that? "

" You will find it in one of the Psalms, too," said Mrs. Vincent. " 'I laid me down and slept; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.' "

" I know another," exclaimed Jenny Forman:

" Rocked in the cradle of the deep,  
I lay me down in peace to sleep. "

" Very good," answered Mrs. Vincent. " But these are poetical expressions; and when you want to speak in plain prose you must say, "I was lying down," or "I lay down." Who can think of another mistake? "

" When you say 'that far' instead of 'so far,' " suggested Nelly Poole.

" Why is it incorrect? "

" Because—I don't exactly know why, but I'm sure it's wrong. "

" Can you give a reason, Mabel? "

" I think it is because 'that' is an adjective, and 'far' is an adjective, too. "

" Good as far as it goes, but you haven't quite completed the explanation. Class,—What is lacking? "

Chorus: "Because adjectives modify nothing but nouns and pronouns."

"What must modify 'far,' then?"

"An adverb; you must say 'so far.'"

"Remember this always," said Mrs. Vincent, "and never allow yourselves to speak of things as 'about that long,'—'about that high,' but say 'so long,' or 'so high.' Can any one suggest another error?"

"When you say, 'Who did you see?' instead of 'Whom did you see?'"

"Why wrong?"

"Because 'whom' ought to be in the objective case, governed by 'see.'"

"I don't believe I ever can remember such kind of things," remarked one of the new pupils. "It all goes in at one ear and out at the other."

"That kind of things,' my dear, not 'such kind,'" answered Mrs. Vincent. After waiting a moment she went on to say, "Whenever a teacher corrects either your grammar or your pronunciation, it is polite to repeat the word or expression after her, to show that you understand what she means."



"*That* kind of things," responded the young girl, pleasantly.

"I think you will not find it as difficult as you suppose to remember how to speak good English, after you have once learned. But in any case, it is every one's duty to try. That will do for this morning."

## CHAPTER III.

## STUDY-HOUR.

"A child's like a cupboard," said the old dame. "If you don't put nothin' in, you can't get nothin' out." OLD TALE.

Learn the value of a man's words and expressions, and you know him. LAVATER.

"I MEAN to work real hard this winter," said Laura, as the girls were getting ready for their first "study-hour."

"What part of speech is 'real,' Laura?" asked her mother.

"'Real'? Why, I don't know; I suppose it's an adjective."

"And what is 'hard'?"

"That must be an adjective, too."

"Ergo?"

"But I don't see what else you can say except 'awfully hard.'"

"How would 'very' do?"

"Oh, 'very' doesn't seem to mean anything; it's such a common kind of word."

"It meant a great deal once, but the trouble with our modern way of talking is that we use these strong expressions on the most trifling occasions, so that when we really need them they sound weak and unmeaning. But if you use the word 'real,' what form must you give it?"

"I know you mean 'really'; but I don't mean that I am going to study really hard, but just tremendously hard."

"I'm very glad to hear your good resolution, but I can't possibly consent to your violating the first principles of your own language. So no more of 'real hard,' if you please. The other day I heard one of our most fashionable belles say to a gentleman in the cars, 'Do come and see us; Ma's home now and she'll be *real* glad to see you!' 'Ma's home,' and 'real glad,' in one breath! I couldn't help thinking to myself, 'My young friend, I'm 'real glad' you were educated 'home,' or at least not at my school!'"

"Who was it, Aunt Fanny?" inquired Ralph.

"My dear boy," said his aunt, "it isn't polite to ask

such questions. If I had meant you to know who it was I should have told you. Did you ever hear about that old Greek who was carrying home something under his cloak, and was met by an inquisitive young man who asked him what he had there?"

"No, ma'am."

"He said, 'Friend, I carry it under my cloak that thou mayst not see it!' We often speak of things by way of illustrating what we are saying which it would not be kind to mention if we named the people to whom they referred."

"But it's so much more interesting if we know who you're talking about!"

"If you want to be grammatical you must say '*whom* you are talking about,' or 'about whom you are talking'; and I'm not telling you a story, to interest you; I am only trying to show you how to avoid common mistakes."

"I wish you could hear a lady at home talk when she meets mother and I in the street," began Elsie.

"Excuse me, Marion," said Mrs. Vincent. "Does she meet I in the street?"

"Excuse *me*, Mrs. Vincent, but I'm not Marion, I'm Elsie."

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I foresee that I shall make that mistake very often. Now, as to meeting 'Mother and I.' Does she meet I?"

"Why, no; she meets both of us."

"You said she meets Mother and I."

"But you said this morning that I mustn't say 'Marion and me.'"

"That was when I asked who wanted to come into my room, and you said me wanted to; at least, you said 'Marion and me.' Don't you see the difference? When you are uncertain whether you should say 'I' or 'me,' leave off the name you put with it and that will generally show you. You can't say 'she was talking to Louise and I,' because she was not talking to I; and you can't say when I ask who is there, 'Marion and me,' because you wouldn't say 'Me is here' if you were alone."

"I think they *can* say it, Mrs. Vincent," said Ruth, "because they *do* say it; and if they couldn't, how could they?"

"That is a conundrum, Ruth; I give it up," answered Mrs. Vincent. "They *mustn't* say it, then, if that will

please your ladyship any better. But, Elsie, I didn't mean to prevent you from finishing what you began to say about your friend at home."

"She begins, 'Well, I den declare! I never see the beat o' this day for meetin' folks! I should think you was about the dozenth I seen since I come out this mornin'!'" As Elsie delivered this with much humor and a peculiar drawl, it raised a general laugh, in which, however, Mrs. Vincent did not join.

"You must be careful, Elsie," said she, "that with your talent for mimicry you don't run the risk of hurting people's feelings. As you are speaking of some one who is a stranger to us, there is no danger of that now; but if you are in the habit of 'taking off' your friends, your doing so will sometimes be repeated to them; and besides, those you are with may have the unpleasant conviction that they will be the next victims when you wish to entertain another set. And remember, needless cruelty is very wrong. No one needs to be more careful about exercising her talent than a natural mimic."

"I wonder where my geography is," said Julia, who had been out of the room. "I've looked for it every place I can think of."

"How can you 'look a place,' Julia?"

"Why, I've looked all over to try and find it, and I can't find it any place."

"You mean 'anywhere' and 'everywhere.' If you speak of a place in that way you must say '*in* any place.' 'Place' is a noun and can not be made to modify a verb by putting 'any' and 'every' before it, any more than if it stood alone. Where did you have your geography last?"

"I had it when I was home," said Julia, "and I'm sure Ma packed it with my other things."

"When you were *at* home. You are not your home; you are a person and home is a place. These little things are just what make the difference between thoroughly well-educated people and half-educated ones. You may be an excellent mathematician and understand several languages and all the 'ologies,' but if you don't speak good English you will lack one of the essential points of a fine education."

"I wish there wasn't any grammar!" exclaimed Marion, at the same time pulling down a window shade near her, to make the light more convenient for herself.

"I hope you'll change your mind when you have been

here a few months," said Mrs. Vincent. "I think grammar is a beautiful study, and the more you know of it the better you'll like it. But I must tell you that it is not well-bred, when you are in company with other people, to alter the light in any way without consulting them, especially when you are one of the younger ones. It happens now that this will be quite as pleasant for all of us, so we will leave it as it is; but remember another time."

"You drew up the shade in school this morning and didn't ask me if I liked it so, Mrs. Vincent," said Ruth, roguishly.

"Yes, Miss, and so I shall again, probably. A teacher has to be care-taker for the whole roomful, and must judge what is most desirable for all. But it is very different for a young girl to do it when there is an older person present."

"Do ladies always remember to do what is polite?" inquired Ruth.

"I'm sorry to say that they do not, always. But I wish you girls to be of those who do. I was once boarding at a lady's house and was practising on the piano when she came in and drew down all the shades without



a word of apology to me, for fear the winter sun would fade her carpet; then she swept out of the room by a different door from the one she came in at, leaving both wide open after her. So you see that all people who are called 'ladies' haven't been taught how to behave themselves."

"I shouldn't call her a lady at all," said Ruth, stontly.

"She went by that name in society, and I don't think she suspected that she wasn't one of the most elegant of women. I thought she had not been well taught at home, or she could not have grown up with such manners. Now you see that this is one reason for cultivating habits of self-control and consideration for others; if you haven't them, people will be sure to lay the blame on your mothers, and will think that they have not brought you up well."

The girls now settled down to their books, but were soon aroused by Ralph's voice in the hall, shonting out, "Lay down, sir; lay down!" His aunt rose with a look of wearied patience, and went out, shutting the door softly behind her.

"Hush, Ralph! The girls are just beginning to study, and you'll disturb them. What was it you said to the dog?"

"I told him to lay down. I want him to keep quiet while I find my ball."

"To *lay* down? Is that right?"

"Well, lie down, then. But it sounds so stuck-up to talk good grammar to a dog!"

"People of sense won't think so. Do you suppose your Uncle Kay ever told a dog to lay down?"

"Oh, well, Uncle Kay's different. He's a gentleman."

"And so will you be, I hope, not only when you grow up, but now, and all the time. Unless you form good habits now, you can't put them on suddenly when you want them. I've seen people try to do that, and they made a great failure. Now you won't say, 'Lay down!' any more, will you?"

"No, ma'am," answered Ralph, who was very fond of his aunt and wanted to please her. "But I'm afraid the boys will laugh at me."

"I don't think they will; they probably won't notice it at all. But what if they should? You must be too independent to care what they think when you are right and they are wrong. Now be as quiet as you can, and don't interrupt our study-hour."

The study-parlor was an interesting sight when Mrs.

Vincent opened the door and glided softly in again. Little Ruth sat at one end of the table conning her spelling-lesson, with one hand pushed in among her chestnut curls, and her tongue sticking out a little at the side of her mouth as was usual when she was cogitating very deeply. The twins had their eyes shut and were swaying backward and forward at precisely the same angle, forming the words with their lips, no whispering being allowed. Julia had her elbows on the table, her head resting on both hands, and her shoulders hunched up as if they were about to "invade the ears," as Cowper says. Her forehead was deeply wrinkled with the intensity of her efforts, and she was so evidently hard at work that Mrs. Vincent hesitated a moment before she whispered to her, "Don't frown, my dear," and tapped her on the shoulder to straighten her. Emily was sitting as straight as an arrow, with her book propped up so that she could read without stooping. Laura, as if it would assist her mental faculties, was drumming with her finger-ends on the table, while she thought out a problem in algebra. Her mother silenced her by an expressive look, and for a time all was still.

"Oh, dear, I'm *so* tired!" said Elsie after half an hour or so of steady work.

"Rest awhile, then," said Mrs. Vincent, "and you can study all the better afterward. In fact, I think a little breathing time will be good for all of you. Beating that tattoo again, Laura?"

"I can't help it, Mamma; really I can't," answered that young person with an injured air.

"Could you help it if you knew that some pleasure excursion depended upon your doing so?" asked her mother.

"Why, yes, I s'pose I could; but then there'd be some object in that."

"And is there no object in breaking yourself of a very rude habit, that will make you disagreeable wherever you are? Don't make foolish excuses, but try to improve. I suppose you had a regular study-hour at Mrs. Barclay's school, didn't you, Emily?"

"Yes, Mrs. Vincent, but we used to study evenings besides."

"'In the evening' is better English than 'evenings'; that is a German idiom. I often hear people say, 'I go there mornings'; 'we read evenings,' and so on,

but it is not correct. How are you getting on, Marion?"

"Pretty well; I have only that much more to learn," said Marion, showing her book.

"*That* much?"

"Oh, I mean, *so* much! I don't believe you'll ever cure me of saying 'that much,' Mrs. Vincent, if you try all your life."

"You haven't as much respect for my abilities as I have, Marion. I shouldn't be surprised if I sent you home cured at Christmas."

## CHAPTER IV.

## RECESS.

The playful children just let loose from school.

GOLDSMITH.

Here a little and there a little.

THE BIBLE.

THE girls had just finished their calisthenic exercises, and were gathered in the large school-room for a quarter of an hour's rest and chat. They were clustered in groups according to the "set" each one belonged to, and those who desired it had brought a little lunch to eat at this time. Mrs. Vincent's family dined at half past one and generally saved their appetites for that hour, but an apple or a piece of bread-and-butter was always forthcoming for those who were too hungry to wait. All tongues were wagging merrily, and one of the teachers was generally to be seen moving about among the little companies, answering questions or making suggestions. On this day it was Miss Darling.

"Haven't you most done?" said one of the girls to another.

"What do you mean by 'most done,' Jessie?" asked Miss Darling. "Do you mean 'done more than any one else has,' or 'done most of all'?"

"Oh, Miss Darling, you know well enough what I mean! I mean almost done."

"Why don't you say so, then?"

"Oh, just—because."

"I wish you would cure yourself of that habit. Why should you be willing to appear ignorant when you have every opportunity of learning what is proper?"

"I'm not willing, but you see I forget." At that moment another voice attracted Miss Darling's attention.

"But that would take all the romance out of life." The speaker pronounced it as if written "*roe-mance*," with a strong accent on the first syllable.

"There is no such word as '*roe-mance*,' Ellen; you mean *ro-mance*; with the accent on the second syllable."

"I'm sure everybody calls it *romance*," said Ellen.

"Then all the highly educated people you know must be nobodies, for they certainly can not accentuate the word in that way."

"Isn't there any authority for '*ro-mance*' Miss Darling?" asked Ada Marx, a soft-voiced girl who was care-

ful not to contradict, but who always wanted to be sure of her ground.

"None whatever. There's the dictionary; look for yourself and you'll see."

Half a dozen eager faces were soon bent over "Worcester," which was unmistakably on Miss Darling's side.

"I'm going to look in 'Webster,'" said Ellen, who never gave up a point while she had an inch of ground to stand upon.

"No use," said Ada with quiet decision. "If there were any other pronunciation Worcester would mention it after his own and tell the authority. If there's nothing else given it's because everybody's agreed."

"I say," said Ellen, addressing one of her companions, "would you go to the Park this afternoon if you were me?"

"Oh, Ellen!" groaned Miss Darling, to whose ear such speeches were like stabs, "have you been three years at this school and still say 'If you were me,' and 'I say'? Poor Mrs. Vincent! I should think she would be in despair!"

"But you know, Miss Darling, recess is to rest in, and we must have a little rest from speaking good grammar—good English, I mean."



"Pray what is *recess*? I don't know any such word."

"*Recess*? Why it's now; this is *recess*."

"Please look it out in the dictionary."

"Well, I declare! I never knew *that* before!" exclaimed Ellen, having satisfied herself that the accent was on the second syllable.

"Then you must have been deaf," remarked Grace Nevins, "for Mrs. Vincent has corrected us for saying it, fifteen hundred and forty-nine times."

"Isn't that slightly exaggerated, Grace?"

"Oh, not much; let me see. Twice a day for the five years I've been at school would more than do it; I call it rather moderate. Oh, dear! It's almost time for the bell to ring—there, Miss Darling, did you hear me say 'almost'? and I don't know my geometry lesson, I don't think."

"You *do* think you don't know it; isn't that what you mean, Grace?"

"Yes, ma'am; I thought that was what I said."

"You said you didn't know it, you didn't think. If you will think a minute now you will see that that second 'don't' was redundant."

"I wonder if I shall have time to run upstairs and

fix my hair before the bell rings," said Julia Featherly, whose locks were in somewhat wild confusion.

"Your hair is 'fixed' now, Julia; that is, if it is fast to your head. Yes; you will have time to arrange your hair, or to dress it, or comb it, or brush it, or curl it, or do anything else to it that can be done in five minutes."

"I'm going to fix up my desk now, Miss Darling," said Ruth, her eyes brim-full of fun.

"I hope not. Are you going to fasten it up against the wall, where that bracket is? You might call that fixing it up. But if you are going to put it in order, I have no objection." And as Ruth danced off to carry out her plan she stumbled over a satchel that lay on the floor. "Oh, Ruthie!" cried the owner, "did you hurt you any?"

"Not a bit," answered Ruth, dashing along the aisle with her head down, looking like a little pony.

"'Did you hurt *yourself*,' Paulina," said Miss Darling. "When 'hurt' is used as a reflexive verb it must have the compound personal pronoun for its object. You sometimes hear ignorant people say, 'I must go and wash me'; that is a mistake of the same sort. Here 'any' is an adjective, and must not qualify a verb. To

hurt yourself 'any' is as bad as to study your lesson 'some,' and you know that isn't right."

"Poor Miss Darling! I should think you'd get tired to death of correcting mistakes all day long."

"I never get tired if I think I am doing any good by all my preaching. If nobody ever improved it would be dreary, but I do think that in looking back over several years I can see a little progress among the old scholars."

"There's the bell!" said Grace, whirling round into her seat and knocking down a pile of books with the motion.

"And there's all your books on the floor," observed her seat-mate.

"Do you say the books *is* on the floor, Eliza?" asked Mrs. Vincent, who was just then coming into the room, and who, as the girls said, "had such an ear for 'bad grammar' she could hear it a mile off."

"No, ma'am, I say they *are* on the floor," replied Eliza.

"Then what ought you to have said about Grace's books instead of 'there's your books'?"

"There *are* your books."

"When I went to school," said Mrs. Vincent, "the teachers were not as particular as we are now. I remember, one of them always said, 'there's two or three little girls here who don't mind when they're spoken to'; or 'there's several little boys that will have to be kept after school.' It never sounded right to me, because I was accustomed to good English at home; but I didn't think out the reason until I began to teach grammar myself. The same teacher used to talk about school's 'taking up' when it began in the morning, and 'letting out' when it closed."

"I should think I ought to know that lesson," said Elsie; "I studied it more than a half an hour in school besides all the time out of school."

"Is it necessary to say 'a half an hour'?" asked her teacher. "'A half hour' might do, but it is more usual to leave out the 'a' entirely, and say, 'half an hour.'"

"I didn't have but a quarter of an hour to study mine," remarked another pupil. "If I'd have known that we were going to have dictation to-day I'd have learned it last night like I most always do."

"Kitty, your ingenuity is wonderful!" exclaimed Mrs. Vincent. "You have contrived to get three gross

mistakes into that last sentence, besides saying that you 'didn't have' something which you did have. I should like to have you parse 'I'd have known.'"

"Why, 'I' is the subject and 'have known' is the predicate."

"Then your sentence would stand 'I have known,' would it?"

"No, ma'am, I meant if I *had* known."

"Certainly; therefore to say 'if I had have known,' must be wrong, must it not?"

"I suppose it must, but it sounds all right."

"It ought not to sound right. It is like many other sentences that are carelessly strung together, and show their weak points as soon as you try to analyze them. And where did you learn to say 'like I do'? It seems to me that is something new."

"Oh, some people that we met at the Springs last summer said it, and I suppose I caught it from them."

"And 'most always'?"

"Oh, Mrs. Vincent! I *really* know better than that!"

"I think you ought to, by this time," said Mrs. Vincent, with that tired, patient look that the girls knew so well. She had been for seven years struggling

against improprieties of speech in her pupils, and yet this was the result ! “ You’re a regular Sisyphus, aren’t you, Mrs. Vincent ? ” asked one of the older girls.

“ I feel like one, sometimes,” answered Mrs. Vincent, “ or like one of the Danaides. But I have my moments of encouragement, too.”

“ Who was Sisyphus, and who were the Danaides ? ” inquired some of the younger girls. But Mrs. Vincent wouldn’t tell them, so they had to wait until school was over, and then they looked out the names in the classical dictionary.

“ This figure ought to be drawn larger, hadn’t it, Mrs. Vincent ? ” inquired Alice Burleigh, pointing to one on the blackboard.

“ How would you parse ‘ hadn’t it ought, ’ Alice ? ”

“ I don’t know. I never could parse any but the sentences in the book.”

“ I don’t wonder at it if those you tried were constructed in that remarkable way. How do you other girls think that sentence ought to have ended ? ”

“ Ought it not ; ” “ oughtn’t it ; ” “ shouldn’t it ”—were the various answers suggested.

“ What kind of verb is ‘ ought ’ ? ” asked the teacher.

"Defective." "Auxiliary."

"Originally defective, coming from the verb 'to owe,' but now used only as auxiliary—to help out another one. So when you use it once you must keep the same form if you have occasion to repeat it. It is as incorrect to say 'you ought to do a thing, hadn't you?' as it would be to say 'you will do it, hadn't you?' or 'you might do it, had you?' although the construction is not the same."

"What kind of verb did you say 'ought' was, Mrs. Vincent?" asked Annie Fay.

"Auxiliary," said Alice, quickly.

"My dear Alice," said Mrs. Vincent, lifting her eyebrows, "did you think Annie spoke to you?"

"No, ma'am, but I knew."

"Do you consider it well-bred to answer a question addressed to another person?"

"I suppose not," said Alice, looking somewhat ashamed. "But I didn't think."

"You must try to form habits of courtesy, and then you need not stop to think. Politeness will come by instinct, and one of the most important forms of it consists in avoiding all interruptions that are not absolutely

necessary, especially towards older persons. To listen well is almost as necessary as to speak well, and the art of doing so perhaps more popular than the other."

During the lesson a little girl appeared from the primary class, and said to Mrs. Vincent, "Miss Stanton would like to speak to you when you're through."

"I can hardly imagine Miss Stanton's using an expression so inelegant as that," answered Mrs. Vincent. "Try to remember exactly what she said."

"She said, 'Tell Mrs. Vincent I should like to see her when her lesson is over.'"

"That sounds much more like Miss Stanton. Tell her I shall be at liberty in a few minutes." Then turning to the class, "One can *get* through but can not *be* through, can *go* home, but can not *be* home or *stay* home. Those are some of the arbitrary rules of our language."



## CHAPTER V.

## SMALL-TALK.

Happy in this, she is not yet so old  
But she may learn; happier than this,  
She is not bred so dull but she can learn.  
SHAKESPEARE.

"Who wants this?" asked Mrs. Vincent just before dinner, holding up a letter and looking at Ruth.

"Me! Me! Me!" replied that little person, jumping up and down and clapping her hands.

"Oh, we never give letters to people who say 'Me' wants them. I'm so sorry you can't have this one."

"I, I, I! That's what I really meant. 'Me' just slipped out by accident. He's always waiting, ready to jump out the minute I open my mouth, and I can't always keep him in."

"It don't hardly seem right for Ruth to have a letter when there's none for any of the rest of us," complained Julia.

"Don't you mean that it *does* hardly seem right, Julia?"

"Yes'm."

"You must remember that when you say a thing seems hardly right it is the same as if you said, 'it does seem hardly right.' Then of course you shouldn't say it doesn't when you mean it does. Sometimes one hears people say, 'I don't hardly ever go there,' when of course what they intend to express is that they hardly ever do go. There is another thing I want you all to notice; why is it incorrect to say 'it don't seem'?"

No one else answering, Laura said, "Because 'don't' is a contraction of 'do not,' and 'do not' is the plural form of the verb."

"That's true," said Emily. "I never thought of that before."

"But now your attention has been called to it, you will remember. I shall never forget the amusement I once had at a friend's house when, in speaking of some one, I said, 'She don't come to see me any more,' and the baby of the family looked up at me with large, serious eyes and remarked, 'We don't say 'She don't'; we say 'She doesn't.'"

"How old was she?" asked Ruth.

"She was five years old, but very, very little, so that

her undertaking to teach older people seemed all the more droll. There's our dinner bell. Is everybody ready?"

"I 'spose I got to go up stairs and wash my hands first," said Ralph, exhibiting a pair of very black paws.

"Why did you wait until now to do it, Ralph? You are old enough to know that you should wash your hands (and face) before the bell rings and not after. And what do you mean by 'I got to go'?"

"I've got to go, I meant."

"That's better, but there's no need of saying 'got' at all. Say 'I have to go,' or 'I must go,' or 'I ought to go.'"

"I always say 'I got to do' a thing," said Elsie.

"Then you always say what is wrong, and I hope you'll try to cure yourself of it."

"Mayn't I read my letter now, Mrs. Vincent?" asked Ruth after she had eaten her soup.

"As you are a very young lady, I think we'll excuse your doing so, but when you grow older, and are visiting your friends, you must remember that it is not polite to read letters at table unless you expect some very special news, and then you must ask leave of the lady of the house, even if you should be as old as Methuselah."

"And suppose you happen to be the lady of the house yourself?" inquired Laura.

"Then you must apologize to your guests or your family, and say, 'If you will excuse me, I should like to see what so-and-so says.'"

"Newspapers must be different," said Elsie. "Papa always reads the paper at breakfast."

"That's a privilege gentlemen often take," said Mrs. Vincent, "but as you are not a gentleman, I hope you will never indulge yourself in such a habit. For a lady to read when other people are at table with her, I think is quite inexcusable."

"Papa must be home by this time," said Ruth. "He left last Monday."

"How can he 'be home,' Ruth? What ought you to say?"

"At home."

"And what was it he left?"

"He left Havana. He says so in this letter."

"'Left' isn't a word you should use without saying what you left. I know it is very common, but that doesn't make it right. You must say, 'He left home,'"

'he left town,' 'he left the house,' or the office, or the ship, or whatever it is, but not merely 'he left.'"

"That *was* Mrs. Fielding you saw in the street to-day, Marion," said Laura. "She told me she met you."

"I thought it was her," answered Marion, "but I wasn't quite sure."

"Could you say, 'I thought her was it,' Marion, or 'I thought her was there'?" inquired Mrs. Vincent.

"Why, no, ma'am."

"Neither must you say, 'I thought it was her.' What is that rule in your grammar about the verb 'To be'?"

"The verb 'To be' takes the same case after it as before it."

"Then, after 'was,' or any other part of the verb, you mustn't put 'her' or 'him' or 'them' or 'me.'"

"I know," said Marion. "Miss Gerry used to talk to Elsie and I about it all the time."

"Did she talk to I?"

"Oh, Mrs. Vincent! It seems as if I never *could* say anything straight! But, any way, 'Elsie and me' always sounds wrong."

"So it would be if I asked you which of your family

went to Miss Gerry's school, and you should say, 'Elsie and me,' because you wouldn't say, 'Me went there.' You must leave off the other word, and then try how it sounds."

"A person doesn't always have time to stop and think before they say a word, Mrs. Vincent," said Elsie.

"Is 'a person' singular or plural, Elsie?"

"Singular."

"Then, why do you say 'they' after it?"

"Because you don't know whether it's a he or a she."

"It is always safe to say 'he' when you are making a remark that applies to people in general; but now, when we are talking about girls, you might just as well say 'she.'"

"I don't believe grammar rules ever teach people to talk right," said Julia. "Every one has to learn for themselves, as they go along."

"Every *one* has to learn for—"

"Himself," said Elsie.

"Yes; himself or herself. And is it correct to say 'talk right'?"

"Talk rightly. But you say, 'do right,' Mrs. Vincent."

"In that case, 'right' is a noun, and what you say is equivalent to 'do the right'; or it is an adjective, qualifying 'what,' or 'that,' or 'which,' understood. You do what is right."

"I think those kind of things are the hardest to learn," said Emily.

"Is 'kind' singular or plural, Emily?"

"'Kind'? Oh, it is singular, but 'things' isn't."

"'Things isn't,'" repeated Ruth, in great glee, thinking that she had caught Emily in a fine mistake.

"That's perfectly right, Ruthie. Emily was speaking of the word 'things,' not of the things themselves. Your pronoun must agree with 'kind,' Emily, not with 'things.' People often make the same mistake by saying, 'Those sort of people,' 'these kind of houses.' *That kind* of expression is one you must be especially careful about, because it is so common among tolerably well-educated people."

In the course of the conversation, some mention was made of music, and Elsie remarked, "I wanted awfully to take, but mother wouldn't let me."

"Take what, Elsie?"

"Music lessons. There was a real good teacher at

the school, but mother thought I had too much to do."

"A *real* good teacher?"

"*Very* good."

"Yes; but never talk about 'taking' when you mean taking lessons. I have heard ladies say, 'I'm going to join,' meaning to join a society or a class; or, 'I don't belong,' meaning belong to a club; or, 'I'm going to leave,' when they were going away. All these expressions are provincial. Say *what* you are going to take, or join, or leave."

"What does 'provincial' mean?" asked Ralph.

"In plain English, it means 'rustic,' or 'countrified,' Ralph. People who are gathered together in cities are likely to be more correct in manners and speech than those who are scattered in country places, though in more essential matters the country people may have the advantage. The word 'urbane,' which now means only 'polite,' or 'courteous,' comes from the Latin word for 'city.'"

"Can Mary bring me a clean plate, Aunt Fanny?" asked Ralph. "I should like some salad, and this one's all over gravy."

"Certainly, but it isn't necessary at table to ask for a



*clean* plate, as if to remind every one that yours is not clean. Say 'another plate,' when you want one."

"Now, Ralph and I are through, Mrs. Vincent," said Ruth, when dinner was over; "can we go and play?"

"Not when you say you are 'through'; you must stay until you learn better."

"Oh, I know better now. I mean we have finished our dinner. Can't we go?"

"Yes, you may go, but if you talk about 'being through,' I shall keep you next time a hundred and twenty seconds longer."

"Oh," gasped Ruth, "I hope we shan't forget. Come, Ralph, let's us go."

"Stop a minute. What does 'let's' mean?"

"'Let's' means 'let us,' of course."

"Then when you say 'let's us go,' you mean 'let us us go,' do you?"

"Oh, Mrs. Vincent, you'll be the death of me! I know you will!"

"I hope not. You look as if you had a good deal of life in you yet. What are you going to say to Ralph about going?"

"Let's go!" And away went the pair, hand in hand, to play "I spy" in the back yard.

"You and Elsie went to the dressmaker's yesterday, Marion?" asked Mrs. Vincent.

"Yes, and she kept us there nearly an hour, but my dress fit beautifully at last."

"'Fitted,' you mean; not 'fit.'"

"There was a lady there," said Elsie, "that stared at us as if she'd never seen anything so queer before, and kept looking from one to the other till we were looked through. I felt like telling her that I hoped she'd know us again next time."

"Did you tell her so?" asked Laura.

"Oh, no; I only wanted to."

"I should have been very sorry if Elsie had forgotten herself so far," said Mrs. Vincent. "An ill-bred woman is a very disagreeable person, but a pert young girl is, I think, a little worse."

## CHAPTER VI.

## A HOLIDAY.

Work while you work,  
Play while you play!  
That is the way  
To be cheerful and gay.

NURSERY RHYME.

Right welcome lessons, conned with willing mind.

C. SOUTHEY.

"HURRAH! hurrah!" shouted Ruth, as she bounced down stairs at half-past seven in the morning; "to-day's Saturday! Won't we have fun?"

"I should think you managed to get a good deal of that out of every day, Ruth," remarked Julia. "I wish I had as much as you do."

"You don't need that 't' at the end of 'wish,' Julia," said Mrs. Vincent, who joined them at this moment. "It comes from 'I wish *that* I had,' shortened; but it doesn't sound well."

"Do you know what we're going to have to-day, Mrs. Vincent?" asked Ruth. "Just pure, solid fun! No work at all."

"Are your lessons all learned for Monday, Ruth?"

"Oh—no; I don't believe they are. There's two or three I don't know."

"How can you say 'there *is* two'? What ought it to be?"

"There *are* two; but it's really too much trouble to talk straight. I want to play."

"So you shall—after you have learned your lessons."

"All day?"

"How about that letter to your mother?"

"Oh, I wish letters were just—well, I won't say where."

"I hope you won't say anything that is selfish or unfeeling. Do you write for your own pleasure or your mother's?"

"Why, for hers, I suppose. It isn't any pleasure to me; it's just work."

"But unselfish people don't mind work when it is done to gratify some one else. The way to write a letter is not to keep thinking of yourself all the time, and how you hate to do it because it keeps you from amusing yourself; but to think of the pleasure it will give your mother to read it, and of what she would like most to hear."

"I expect you think we're all pretty selfish, don't you, Mrs. Vincent?" asked Emily.

"I haven't had time to find out yet, but I hope not to be obliged to think anything so disagreeable. Talking of 'expect'—you can't expect anything that is going on at this present time; 'expect' refers only to the future."

"Why, Mrs. Vincent," said Marion, "everybody says when you ask if anything happened yesterday, 'I expect it did'; and that isn't future."

"Your 'everybody' must be a very ignorant everybody, then, Marion, because you can *not* expect what is past or present; so you must separate yourself from the company of that everybody, and not walk in his ways."

"I don't see how anybody is ever going to learn to talk correctly when they've always been used to hearing things different."

"And I don't see how 'anybody,' which is a singular noun, can be followed by 'they,' which is a plural pronoun."

"What else can I say?"

"You can say, 'when *she* has been used.'"

"Well, one must do the best they can, and they can't do any better."

"But 'one' isn't 'they,' Marion!"

Marion took refuge in silence, and Elsie took up the strain. "May we go and see Aunt Kate to-day, Mrs. Vincent? It's only a little ways from here."

"What is 'a ways'? I should think that there were more ways than one by your 'way' of talking, and yet you say '*a* ways,' which means only one."

"A little way. Can we go? Auntie said she was going to have company for dinner."

"I wonder how they will be cooked," said Laura.

"My dear!" said her mother reprovingly.

"Well, mamma, Marion spoke of the company as if they were roast beef, or green peas, or something."

"I think that when I am present you may safely leave criticism to me. Marion, it is more proper to say that your aunt will have company at dinner, or has invited company to dinner. Laura's remark was not at all polite, but it is true that it sounds as if the company were to be eaten, when you talk of having it for dinner."

"Here's a parcel for you, Aunt Fanny," said Ralph, who had been sent on an errand and had just come in.

"Who brought it?" said Mrs. Vincent.

"Oh, a great big Dutchman."

"I don't believe you know a Dutchman when you see him, Ralph. What made you think he was Dutch?"

"Why, he talked as if he had just come over. He said, 'Dare is von leedle parcel vor your moder.' And he looked just like all the Dutchmen 'round here."

"But there are no Dutchmen 'round here. At least I never saw one."

"Why, Aunt Fanny, there's Mr. Schneider, and Mr. Schmidt, and Mr. Bauer, and I don't know how many more!"

"No; those are all Germans."

"Well, it's just the same."

"Oh, by no means. Where do Dutchmen come from?"

"I suppose they come from Dutchland, don't they?"

"There is no such country as Dutchland. There is *Deutschland*. What does it mean, Elsie?"

"Germany," said Elsie.

"And where do Dutch people live?"

"In Holland."

"Now, Ralph, I hope you won't speak of Germans as 'Dutch' people any more. You might as well call a Portuguese a Spaniard. That mistake was first made by

illiterate people, and well educated ones have said it after them, in fun, until now many of them have forgotten the difference."

"I wonder if she isn't going to send up any more cakes," said Laura, whose hunger was not yet appeased.

"May I ask whom you mean by 'she'?" inquired her mother.

"Why, Bridget, mamma; she is the only person in the house probably baking cakes at this moment."

"It would be more becoming in you to call her by her name. I shall be very much mortified when you have a house of your own and I am visiting you, if you speak of your cook as 'she.'"

"There's a funny old woman who comes to our house sometimes," said Emily, "and when you ask her how she is, she says, 'I'm right peart, but he's been sick abed sence I was here afore.' She's said it so often now that we know she means her husband."

"Come along, and let's study our lessons, Ralph, so we can go out to play," said Ruth, when breakfast was over.

"I must go and wash my hands first," said Ralph,



who always had specimens on his skin of everything he had eaten.

"How do you spell 'wawsh,' Ralph?" asked his aunt.

"W-a-s-h, wash."

"That spells *wosh*; it doesn't spell 'wawsh' any more than w-a-t-c-h spells 'wawtch.'"

"Miss Blank is always correcting us for saying 'Wawshington' in history class," said Emily.

"That isn't equal to Bessie Banks, though," said Laura. "She recites a piece of poetry that goes in this way:

" ' There was a frawg  
Sat on a lawg,  
In a bawg.  
There came a dawg,  
And with a jawg.  
He pitched that frawg  
Right off that lawg.' "

"Why don't you call 'dawg,' 'dogg,' like fog and all the rest of the *og* words?" asked Emily.

"That is the proper way to pronounce it," answered Mrs. Vincent. "It is only a bad habit people have

fallen into that makes them say 'dawg.' Those who wish to be perfectly correct do say 'dogg,' now."

"There was two little dogs," began Ralph.

"'Was dogs'? What's that, Ralph?"

"Were, I mean—Oh, I've forgotten what I was going to say."

"Never mind," said Ruth, dragging him by the hand.

"Let's go."

"It looks like it was going to rain," observed Julia.

"They can't go out if they don't go pretty soon."

"'Looks as if it were going to rain,' Julia; not 'was going,' when you express an uncertainty."

"Elsie," said Laura, "if you're going in the school-room, will you bring down my history?"

"I ain't Elsie, if you mean me," said Marion, who was about to leave the room.

"I dislike that word 'ain't' extremely, Marion," said Mrs. Vincent. "I wish you would say, 'I'm not.' Of what is 'ain't' a contraction?"

"Of 'are not,' I suppose," answered Marion, "but I don't see why it shouldn't be considered a contraction of 'am not,' just as well."

"A very good reason for avoiding it is that people who

use it habitually never stop to think of the words from which it is abbreviated, but are quite as likely to say, he, she or it 'ain't,' as I 'ain't,' or they 'ain't.' There are plenty of equivalent short expressions like 'we're not,' and 'he's not'; or you can use 'isn't' or 'aren't.' Now, Laura, what was it you asked Marion to do?"

"I said if she went in the schoolroom I wished she would bring down my history."

"Went *into* the schoolroom, you mean," said Mrs. Vincent. "After you have entered a room you move about *in* it, but you go *into* it."

"I see," said Laura. "That's just the difference between the accusative and the ablative in Latin."

"Yes," continued her mother. "You go *into* a church, you sit down *in* it; you go *into* a ship and then you sail *in* it."

"And you put a thing *into* your mouth, and after it is *in* you swallow it!" rejoined Laura.

"I'll bring down your history for you, Laura," said Julia, who was always ready to do a kind action.

"Oh, thank you; don't trouble," answered Laura. "I can just as well do it myself. It was only pure laziness that made me want Marion to do it."

"My dear," said Mrs. Vincent, "'trouble' is a transitive verb, and must not be used without an object. Never say 'don't trouble' without saying *what* you are not to trouble—yourself. That is a provincialism."

"I don't see how any one is ever going to remember all these things," said Julia, with a discouraged air.

"You remember how to play a piece of music, how to dress your hair, how to do various sorts of fancy-work," answered Mrs. Vincent. "It's all a matter of habit, and when the habit is once formed you'll never have to remember it at all."

"Mrs. Vincent," said Ernestine Gay, coming into the room, "would you be so kind as to loan Clara and I an umbrella? It's beginning to rain quite hard, and we shall be wet through before we can get to the cars."

"I will *lend* you an umbrella with pleasure," answered Mrs. Vincent. "Ladies don't 'loan' things to one another, though the act of lending may be called a loan. It is a term used in business, but not properly in social life. Did you ask me to lend 'I' an umbrella?"

"I meant *me*, Mrs. Vincent. You know I'm always forgetting."

## CHAPTER VII.

## ODDS AND ENDS.

The manner of saying or of doing any thing goes a great way in the value of the thing itself.

SENECA.

LAURA was going by invitation one day to dine and spend the evening with a young friend. "I hope," said her mother, "that you will not behave as I once saw a young girl do at a house where I was visiting. As she went into the parlor, instead of paying her respects to the lady of the house, who rose as she entered and stood politely ready to receive her, she rushed past as if she didn't see this lady at all, and threw herself into the arms of the young girl who was her bosom friend. Then, when their greetings were over, she came back and how-d'ye-do'd her friend's mother, sublimely unconscious of her own ill-breeding."

"I think you may depend on me, Mamma," said Laura, "for being *tolerably* civil. I don't think you ever saw me doing anything quite so *garuche* as that."

"What is *gauche*?" asked Ruth.

"Tell her, Laura," answered Mrs. Vincent. "You used the word, so of course you know what it means."

"Why, I suppose—it means—impolite, doesn't it?"

"It is a French word, meaning awkward, and we use it to give an idea of the lack of proper training, both as to movements and manners. (By the way, my dear, I much prefer English words when they can be made use of.) But all ill-breeding doesn't come from want of training. What do you suppose, any of you, is the most common cause of it?"

"I suppose it comes from selfishness," said Emily, after a moment's pause.

"I think that is the cause of about nine tenths of it. Some writers go so far as to say that no thoroughly unselfish person can ever be really impolite. I don't know that I should quite agree with that, for some very good people do rude things through pure ignorance, such as pressing and teasing people to eat what they don't want, urging them to stay when they would rather go, and so on. But generally a real desire to make others happy will produce manners which can not be very severely criticised."

"I expect people have often criticised me," said Marion. "*I* never know when I'm doing impolite things."

"'Expect' refers to the future, Marion; not to the past."

"I suppose they have, then. They *must* have. But there's very few people as particular as you, Mrs. Vincent."

"There *is* people?"

"There *are* people. I can't hardly open my mouth but what I make a mistake."

"Perhaps you mean you *can* hardly."

"Well, I give it up. I'll let somebody else take their turn now."

"How can 'somebody,' which means some one person, take 'their' turn, which means the turn of more than one?"

Marion pressed her lips tightly together, and pinched them up with her fingers, to show that she was not going to commit herself by any further remark.

"When are you coming back from your excursion, Laura?" ask Elsie. (She pronounced it 'excursion'.)

"'Excur-shun,' Elsie," said Mrs. Vincent; "not 'ex-cur-zhun.'"

"Elsie will perzist in calling it so, though Mrs. Baker told her not to a hundred times."

"And did Mrs. Baker never tell you not to say 'perzist'?"

"I don't remember as she did."

"Remember *that* she did, Marion."

"If I'd have known that you'd take us up so on grammar, Mrs. Vincent, I'd have studied it extra hard."

"If you 'had have known,' Marion? Why do you need that 'have'? Why not say, 'If I had known'? Julia, my dear, don't handle your hair. The one place to do that is in your own bedroom, and then only when you are dressing."

"Want to trade pencils?" said Elsie, offering hers to Julia.

"Young ladies don't 'trade,' Elsie; they 'exchange' pencils sometimes."

"Don't you trade at a store, Mrs. Vincent?"

"No, I buy at a store; I never 'trade' anywhere."

"What does 'trade' mean, then?"

"It means to make exchanges, by money or otherwise, in the way of business; but it is not an appropriate word for social use."



"I wouldn't want to change that pencil, Elsie, if I was you," said Ruth. "Yours is better."

"Say, 'If I *were* you,' Ruth."

"But you don't let me say 'I were going,' and 'I were cold.'"

"When it comes after 'if,' it is different. Do you know why, Emily?"

"Because 'if' is the sign of the subjunctive mode."

"I don't know anything about the bobjunctive," said Ruth. "What kind of a thing is it?"

"'What kind of thing,' Ruth; not 'what kind of a thing.'"

"Oh, dear! I don't believe I ever will remember all those kind of krinky-kranky words."

"How can there be 'those kind' any more than there can be 'those girl' or 'these boy'?"

"Well, you know I meant 'that kind.'"

"And when people say they never *will* remember, it means or ought to mean, that they don't want to remember. That isn't so with you, is it?"

"Now, Mrs. Vincent! You *know* it isn't." And Ruth accompanied the words with a violent hug.

"Then you must say, 'I never *shall* remember'; not

'will.' But to go back to the subjunctive, Emily. Is 'if' always a sign that it must be used?"

"I suppose so, Mrs. Vincent."

"Would you not say, 'If she was in the room at that time, she must have heard what I said'?"

"Yes; that sounds right, but I don't exactly see the difference."

"Perhaps you can tell us, Laura."

"When you speak of a matter of fact—something that did happen, or did not happen—you use the indicative; but if you speak of a contingent possibility, you must use the subjunctive."

"Give us an example."

Laura thought a minute or two. Then she said, "'If I was told so, I have forgotten it.' That's the indicative. 'If I were to go there now, she wouldn't see me.' That's the subjunctive."

"That is a very good illustration. Another thing you notice about it is that when we speak of what is past, we almost always make use of the indicative: 'though he was not there, the business was attended to.' 'I told you to stay if she was at home.'"

"Say, Aunt Fanny," said Ralph, bursting into the

room like a young whirlwind, "have you seen my ball any place?"

"My dear, will you please to shut the door, and take off your cap, and behave like a gentleman? Why do you begin with 'Say'? That is a very bad habit, and I have told you of it a great many times."

"I forget."

"Where did you ask if I had seen your ball?"

"Why, any place. I've looked all over, and I can't find it."

"You don't mean to ask if I have seen a place for your ball, so you shouldn't ask if I have seen it any place. What is it I have told you to say instead of 'any place'?"

"Anywhere."

"And this makes how many times that you have been reminded of it?"

"I don't believe it's more than nineteen, Aunt Fanny."

"Just eighteen times too many, because I have heard your mother correct you for the same thing. Now, as to your ball—I have not seen it; perhaps some one of the girls has."

.

"Which one was it?" asked Laura.

"Oh, it's a red one. I haven't but one."

"You *have* but one, Ralph, or you have only one."

"I saw it under the hall table," said Elsie, "once this morning."

"When? Where?" inquired Ralph, eagerly.

"Oh, quite a while ago."

"'Quite a while' isn't good English, Elsie," said Mrs. Vincent. "You may say 'a little while,' or 'a great while,' but not 'quite a while.' People sometimes say, 'quite a large audience,' or 'quite a comfortable fortune,' but both are incorrect."

"I don't see how either of them are wrong," remarked Marion.

"Does 'either' mean one, or more than one?"

"It means one."

"Then, ought we to say, 'either of them are'?"

"I suppose not, but it don't sound natural to say, 'either of them is.' You see 'them' and 'is' don't go well together."

"It do not sound natural," said Ruth, silyly.

"You see Ruth is picking up scraps of grammar, as well as the rest of you. *She* is not going to be left be-

hind! But as to 'either' and 'neither,' so long as you understand perfectly the reason why one expression should be used more than another, and have good authority for it, you mustn't mind how it sounds to you, but practise using the right one until it sounds more natural than the other."

"I remember," said Laura, "when I couldn't bear to say, 'It must be she,' and 'I thought it was they.' It sounded so awfully stilted."

"Any awe in it, Laura?"

"Yes, Mamma; awfully, horribly, terribly, hideously, enormously, outrageously stilted."

"If awe and terror and horror and outrage and enormity arise from such slight causes, what words will you have to express your feelings when you want to tell of the sacking of a city by a foreign army or a mob? Don't you think it would be better to keep each set for its appropriate use?"

"Oh, I suppose so; but it's so much easier to take the same word for everything."

"That is the excuse made for that vulgar kind of speech called slang; it is 'so much easier' to use the same unmeaning expression for all sorts of purposes

than to take the pains to select the proper words to represent what one means. You are forming your habits for life now, and it depends on yourself whether they are good or bad ones. Don't imagine that it is of no consequence. Everything is of consequence, and your speech among the rest."

"You didn't tell us why we mustn't say 'quite,' Mrs. Vincent," said Marion.

"No, but I will now. What part of speech is 'quite'?"

"'Quite'—let me see; 'quite large,' 'quite natural'—it must be an adverb."

"And what part of speech is 'a while'?"

"That's a noun, so it can't be modified by an adverb. But you say 'There were quite a good many people there'."

"No, I don't say 'quite a good many people,' and neither does any one who wishes to speak correctly. You may say 'quite a large number of people,' because in that case poor, abused 'quite' does its proper duty in qualifying an adjective; but to make an adjective of it in its own person is, I assure you, *quite* out of the question."

"I thought you couldn't use 'quite' except when you meant 'entirely,'" said Laura.

"That was the original meaning of the word," answered Mrs. Vincent, "but the other use is growing in favor, and is so general that I don't think it worth while to make a point of the distinction. There are so many things to be learned about grammar that we can't afford to be purists in regard to small matters, for fear of causing the more important ones to be neglected."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE FIRST COMPOSITIONS.

Here will be an old abusing of . . . the King's English.  
SHAKESPEARE.

THESE were not the first compositions that each girl had ever written, but the first given in for the year. Miss Blank was the composition-teacher, and usually read aloud selections from the various papers without giving the names of the writers, making criticisms and asking questions as she went along. The first essay she took up was one on "Nursiug." I shall omit the corrections made in punctuation and spelling, noticing only such as had reference to the use of words.

"Nursing is a very important accomplishment. When a person is sick, it must be very unpleasant for them to have a careless or ignorant nurse." Here Miss Blank stopped, and asked whether any one had a criticism to make. "For him to have," "For her to have," was promptly answered, from various quarters of the school-room.



“‘It is also very necessary to have one who can prepare your food nicely. A good nurse is like angels’ visits—few and far between.’ What do you think of that part of the description, girls? How do you suppose a woman looks when she is ‘few and far between’?”

“It ought to be ‘good nurses,’” said Rosa Lee.

• “‘Good nurses’ we will make it, then. ‘A nurse should be patient and orderly, and also to have a good memory, so that she can remember the doctor’s directions.’ Should to have a good memory?”

“Ought to have a good memory,” said Fanny Brown.

“Then how must the sentence begin?”

“Ought to be patient and orderly.”

“Yes, and it will be better to repeat ‘ought’ when the verb is changed. ‘She must also wear slippers that do not creak, nor whisper in the sick person’s room when it can possibly be avoided.’ Is there any danger of the slippers’ whispering?”

“And must not whisper,” answered a chorus of voices.

• “‘If she has to nurse a scarlet-fever patient, it is a good way to take some preventative against it, so that

she will not break down and have to be taken care of too.' Against what?"

"Against the fever."

"But scarlet-fever is not a noun here; it is used as an adjective. As the sentence stands, it reads 'against' the patient. We will correct it by saying 'against the disease.' Now, what is a preventative?"

"Something to prevent something else."

"Look it out in the dictionary."

Alice Burleigh looked for it, but, to her surprise, did not find it there. "Here is 'preventive,'" she said, "but not 'preventative.'"

"Because there is no such word in the English language. It is a natural mistake to make, there being so many other words formed in the same way that it misleads us. A better word here would be 'precautions,' which has a wider meaning than 'preventive.'"

"'People make the best nurses when they have been sick a good deal themselves, so that they know just what their patients want.' And suppose they have not been sick, how are they to find out? Can nobody tell? By sympathy; by putting themselves in the sick man's

place and *feeling* what would be most pleasant for him."

Then taking up the paper again, Miss Blank went on:

" 'I should think it would be very unpleasant to be sick in a hospital and have strange nurses to take care of them.' Take care of whom?"

"Of the patients."

"But there has been no noun for 'them' to refer to."

"You might say, 'for a person to be sick and have strange nurses to take care of him.'"

" 'A nurse has need of strong nerves, so as to be able to bear the sight of a surgical operation, and also being able to care for the limb afterward.' Does any one see a mistake here?"

" 'Being able,' and 'to be able,' connected in the same sentence."

"What should it be?"

" 'And also to be able,' " " 'And should also be able.' "

" 'A nurse must not mind if sick people are ungrateful to her. When they get well they will remember all she has done for them, and are thankful.' That sentiment is good, but I think the expression might be improved."

“‘And will be thankful to her.’”

“Yes, that is better. My next composition is on ‘The Pyramids.’ ‘One of the greatest wonders of the world are the Pyramids of Egypt.’ Is this correct?”

No one spoke at first, but after a moment’s waiting some one said, “‘One of the greatest wonders *is*.’”

“That will do, or, if the expression sounds awkward, change the sentence a little and make it read, ‘The Pyramids are among the greatest wonders of the world.’ The next sentence is, ‘For many centuries they have stood in the same place we see them now.’ Do we see a thing ‘a place’?”

“‘In which we see them now.’”

“‘They have seen all the pomp of the Egyptian world, when great kings with all their servants and chariots and now they look down on a country which has fallen very much.’” Here Miss Blank paused, and looked up for a criticism.

“‘Fallen very low,’” was suggested.

“That will be an improvement, but it is not the main one needed. I will read the sentence again.” After this was done the corrections came promptly. “She

didn't tell what the great kings with all their servants and chariots did."

"That is an error of carelessness. How might it have been avoided?"

"By reading the composition aloud to herself before it was handed in," said Anna Vail.

"The kings must have considered the pyramids very important, as they always commenced to build one on coming to the throne.' Is this right?"

"'Began to build one.'"

"Why?"

"Because you mustn't say '*commence to do a thing.*'"

"How else might it be altered?"

"By saying '*commenced building.*'"

"And, besides, the writer means that each king began building a pyramid—not that all began on one. '*The pyramids are of various sizes, and seventy in number.*'"

"'Are seventy in number.'"

"'They are built of stone or brick, and are hollow inside.' Is there any unnecessary word there?"

"'Inside' is unnecessary, because if they are hollow

it must be inside. They can't be hollow on the outside."

" 'One of the largest of the obelisks have been taken to America'— "

" 'Has been taken.' "

" Is that all? "

" It should be 'has been brought.' "

" Why? "

" Because you bring a thing to the place where you are, and take it to a place where you are not. "

" 'And set up in Central Park, in New York. I think it is even more than the pyramids.' "

" It ought to be 'more wonderful,' " said Mary Felton, quickly.

At this several of the girls looked round and smiled at Mary, showing by their manner that they recognized her as the author.

" Young ladies," said Miss Blank, " do you know that you are behaving very rudely? You know by experience that it is a trying ordeal to have your compositions read before the class, and you are aware that you make it more unpleasant for the writer by calling attention to her personally. Good taste as well as good feeling should prevent such discourtesy. "

And laying down the paper she took up one entitled,  
"The Holidays."

"'Christmas is kept in most all the countries in the world.'" In answer to a look of inquiry the class responded, "'Almost all.'"

"'At our house the little ones always hang up their stockings the night before, and in the morning every one of them are up before daylight feeling around among the stockings to try and find out what is in them.' How many mistakes in that sentence?"

"You can't say, 'Every one are,' and it ought to be, 'try to find out.'"

"'In Germany people use the Christmas-tree more than any other country.'" 'More than *in* any other country,' was the correction made.

"'They are generally green,'—what are? The people?"

"No, the tree."

"Then you must say, 'It is generally green'; though 'usually' would be better. 'But I have read of a very pretty one that was all covered with white cotton to represent snow, and strung with glass icicles. I think it must have been beautiful. I should have liked to have

been there to have seen it.' What a sentence! Can any one improve it?" Miss Blank then read the sentence again, slowly, and after various suggestions it settled down into, "I should like to have been there to see it."

"'New Year is not so pleasant as Christmas, but is more useful. Every one is always resolving that they will not get cross or angry that year, and will try to always get their lessons and be kind to their friends.' Those are good resolutions, but they might be more correctly expressed. Is 'their' or 'they' correct when referring to 'every one?'"

The class agreed that it was not.

"How should the sentence be worded?"

"Either by saying 'she' and 'her,' or beginning it 'People are.'"

"There is another mistake. Do you like the sound of 'will try to always get?'"

"It ought to be 'always to get.'"

"Why?"

"Because the sign 'to' must not be separated from the infinitive verb."

"Give some other examples of its incorrect use."

"'To immediately go.' 'To invariably answer.' 'To



always say.' 'To meanly take advantage of anybody.'"  
These various answers were given after a little reflection.

" 'Thanksgiving is also a holiday, but I don't like it as well as Easter, because not so long.' What is not so long? The writer, or Easter, or Thanksgiving? "

" 'Because it is not so long.' 'On account of its not being so long.' "

" 'I have seldom or ever had such a pleasant time as I had last Easter, when I went to Washington.' Two mistakes there; who can tell me what they are? "

" 'Seldom or never'; 'seldom if ever.' " "That is one; what is the other? " The sentence was read again, but no one could point out a fault in it.

" What part of speech is 'such' ? "

" An adjective. "

" What is it made to qualify in this sentence? "

" A pleasant time. "

" True, but if you were parsing 'a pleasant time' you wouldn't parse it as one noun, would you? "

" No; 'pleasant' is an adjective and 'time' is a noun. "

" Then you make the adjective 'such' modify the adjective 'pleasant.' "

" But, Miss Blank, *everybody* says it. "

"It is true that almost everybody says it, and it may perhaps be called an idiom; but, strictly speaking, it is not correct, and I want you to understand the reason why. Another thing I must mention to you. 'Having a time,' of any sort, is an Americanism. Our English cousins would say 'enjoying one's self.' Now, as our time is growing short, I will omit the remaining part of this composition, and read you one on 'Presence of Mind.'

"'Presence of mind is a great gift to any one, and benefits not only the person who possesses it, but also his or her friends. At the time of the last great fire, people showed a great lack of this quality,—'any correction here?'"

"Three 'greats' too near together."

"'And instead of saving something necessary or valuable, they took the first thing they came to; but every one was so panic-stricken they did not stop to think.' Is 'every one' the proper word for such a sentence?"

"All were so panic-stricken."

"'One woman was seen by a friend of mine running down the street in the daytime, with an ironing-board and a lighted lantern. To always know what to do in

an emergency is one of the greatest of blessings.' Any mistake there?"

" 'Always to know,' or 'to know always.' "

" 'To some people the right thing seems naturally to suggest itself at the moment when it is needed. It often happens that a person who has never before attracted much attention by his courage, wisdom, or any other good quality, comes into notice by his great presence of mind in a time of imminent danger. People sometimes say, after having passed through an experience where they had not done the right thing at the right moment, that if the same circumstance was to occur again—' "

" 'Were to occur again.' "

" 'They would know just how to act. But I don't think this would be the case, for you are so apt to lose your presence of mind that in nine cases out of ten you would do the same thing (or something just as foolish) right over again.' "

" 'Leave out 'right,' " suggested the author.

" 'And change 'you' and 'your' into 'one' and 'one's.' 'Some authors make their characters do very wonderful things, such as no one, even if he possessed a great amount of this quality, would be likely to accom-

plish.' 'Amount' is not a very good word to use in estimating presence of mind. It would be better to say, 'a great deal of this quality,' or 'remarkable presence of mind.' I have kept the older girls' compositions to read to you next week."

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## CHAPTER IX.

## TABLE-MANNERS (AND OTHER THINGS).

Manners must adorn Knowledge and smooth its way through the world.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

"WHAT part of the chicken do you like, Julia?" asked Mrs. Vincent one day at dinner.

"Any part, Mrs. Vincent."

"I will tell you what an old gentleman once said to me when I made that answer: 'There is no any part to this chicken.'"

"But," said Ruth, "if you don't care which part you have, and don't like one part better than another, how can you say that you like any part best? It would be telling a story."

"You needn't do that. You can say, 'I will take some of the white meat, if you please;' or you may mention the dark meat, or a leg, or a wing,—anything to save the carver the trouble of making a choice for you."

"If I was you, Julia, I'd say white meat; that's best."

"I have given Julia some of the white meat, my dear, because most young girls like that; but do I hear one of *my* children saying, 'If I wuz you?'"

"'Were,' I meant; you told me that yesterday. I'll really try and remember."

"Try *to* remember—not try *and*. To try and do a thing is to try it first and do it afterward."

"I expect you are tired of reminding us, Mrs. Vincent."

"What time does 'expect' refer to?"

"Oh, to something that's going to come; not to now. May I have some more water? You see I have drank up all mine a'ready."

"Drunk it already; we don't say 'have drank,' nor 'a'ready.' Mary will give you some water, but it is neither well-mannered nor good for your health to drink so much and so fast. Everything at the table should be done moderately."

"But I was *so* thirsty!"

"Water quenches your thirst better if you drink slowly and a little at a time. Then you will not need so much."

"Isn't this a splendid dinner, Aunt Fanny?" asked

Ralph, who saw some of his favorite dishes on the table.

"A dinner can't be 'splendid,' Ralph; it may be excellent, or remarkably nice, or even delicious, but not splendid, which means shining with a brilliant lustre. There is nothing brilliant about roast chicken, nor shining about mashed potato, nor lustrous about canned corn. You must suit your epithets to your subject."

"What are 'epithets,' Aunty?"

"An epithet is an addition to the name of anything you are talking about, describing the thing. But if it doesn't describe the thing it shouldn't be used for that purpose. I once heard a gentleman talking about the magnificent buckwheat cakes they had at Delmonico's. I expected to hear him talk next about superb molasses, but he didn't mention that."

"For my part," said Ruth, "I think this drumstick is perfectly *exquisite*."

"Oh, Ruth, if you don't want to spoil my dinner, don't let me hear you say *exquisite*! I can endure a great deal, but I really can *not* endure *exquisite*! That goes beyond my patience."

"Why can't I say '*exquisite*,' Mrs. Vincent? Is it a bad word?"

"*Exquisite* is not a bad word, if it is used rightly; but to misapply it and mispronounce it too, is to impose upon your friends. Marion, will you have another piece of chicken?"

"Thank you," said Marion.

"Thank you, yes, or thank you, no?"

"I'll take some, if you please."

"You know it is impossible for me to guess which you mean when you say only 'Thank you.' In French when you say, '*Merci*,' which means 'Thank you,' you decline what is offered you."

"I'd just as live have another piece if anybody asked me," said Ruth.

"How do you spell 'live,' Ruth?" asked Mrs. Vincent, as she laid another of Ruth's favorite drumsticks on her plate.

"L-i-v-e," said Ralph, quickly.

"Is your name Ruth, my dear?"

"No, ma'am,—not exactly; but I thought I'd spell it in case Ruth didn't know how."

"You know that is not polite. But I don't think either of you knows how to spell the word Ruth used. Emily, how do you spell it?"



"I don't know, Mrs. Vincent. I never thought about it. I should have spelt it l-e-a-v-e."

"What do you say, Julia? Marion? Elsie? Then we shall have to fall back on Laura."

"L-i-e-f," answered Laura.

"Just as *lief*, is what you mean; not 'live' nor 'leave.' Lief is an old word meaning willingly or gladly, and when you say it you must remember how it is spelt. Some people have so little idea of its real meaning that they say 'just as livs.'"

"Wouldn't you like the balance of the chicken now, Ruth?" asked Ralph, when the second drumstick had disappeared from Ruth's plate.

"Ralph," said his aunt, "it is very, *very* ill-bred to notice what people eat, or make any remarks upon it. You needn't trouble yourself about Ruth's dinner; I'll see to that. But what do you mean by the 'balance' of a chicken?"

"Why, the rest of it."

"That is not the meaning of the word 'balance.' In making up an account it means the remainder, but not otherwise. By the way, talking of balances, did you see the bookkeeper at your uncle's office to-day?"

"No, nor Uncle Kay either, because neither of them were there."

"Doesn't 'neither' mean 'neither one'?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And ought you to say 'one were there'?"

"N—no; but 'them was' sounds wrong."

"If you always say it where it belongs, it will end by sounding right. Will you have some more gravy, Ruth?"

"Yes, if you please; I do *love* gravy."

"Then you have just the same feeling for gravy that you have for me? I shall be jealous."

"Oh, you know I love you a great, great deal more than I do anything to eat. Now, don't you?"

"I hope so; but don't you think it would be better to say you *like* gravy and other good things, and save your love for your friends? I do."

"You know I always agree with you, Mrs. Vincent."

"Except when Aunt Fanny sends you to bed at eight o'clock and you want to stay up till nine," said Ralph.

"Oh, such little differences of opinion don't count. I love my dear Mrs. Vincent equally as well as if she let me stay up till ten."

"Thank you, my dear, but you mustn't say 'equally as well'; 'equally well' is the correct expression."

"Doesn't most everybody say 'equally as well,' Mrs. Vincent?" asked Emily.

"Many people do who should know better; but what kind of talk is 'most everybody'?"

"Oh, I meant almost everybody."

"Have you learned your arithmetic for to-morrow, Elsie?" asked Laura.

"Not quite; Ella Gray came in just as I was studying, and prevented me finishing it before dinner; I'm going to get it to-night."

"How would you parse 'finishing' in that sentence, Elsie?" asked Mrs. Vincent.

"It's in the objective case governed by 'prevented,' isn't it?"

"Then you must change 'me' into the possessive—'prevented my finishing it'—or you must introduce a preposition—'prevented me *from* finishing it.' You can't make the same verb govern 'me' and 'finishing.'"

"Ella sat and talked until I thought she'd never go. I suppose she thought I'd have plenty of time for it to-night; she's ever so much quicker than me."

"Finish that sentence, Elsie. Is she quicker than me am, or me are, or me is?"

"Why, must you say 'quicker than I'?"

"Certainly, unless you can add—"

"Or you might say 'than I be,'" interrupted Laura.

"My dear Laura, did you not notice that I was just in the middle of a sentence? You might at least wait until the end of it."

"I beg your pardon, Mamina; I know I'm always interrupting."

"That is said to be an American habit," rejoined Mrs. Vincent. "Well-bred people of other nations say that they don't practise it. That is something in which we might imitate them."

"I don't want to imitate other nations," said Ralph. "I'd rather be like an American."

"Suppose your father had a lame foot, Ralph, and was blind of one eye; would you rather be like him, lame and half blind, or like Pat Donnelly, whose eyes and feet are perfect?"

"I'd rather have eyes and feet like Pat's, and be like my father in other things."

"So you can be like the Americans in everything that

is good and worth copying; but if there is anything in which other nations are superior to us, it would be foolish to reject it merely because they are not our countrymen."

"I hate the English," said Julia, somewhat fiercely.

"My dear, don't handle your hair in company. That is thought in England to be a very unladylike habit, and if you should ever go there I should want you to show how far your manners are better than English manners. As to hating the English, I think it is a feeling you will get over as you grow older and know more about them. The feeling you call 'hate' probably arises because you are just studying the history of our English wars. It isn't worth while to 'hate' anybody."

"Isn't it about time for your father to come, Marion?" asked Laura, after some further talk about foreign nations, and the reasons for liking or disliking them.

"He said the last letter I got from him that he didn't know when he'd be here. I expect he's had such a good time down South he don't want to come back at all."

"How can you 'expect' what is past, Marion?" asked Mrs. Vincent.

"I suppose he has; I take it for granted he has," answered Marion.

"You said, 'He said the last letter I got from him'; how could he say a letter?"

"He said it *in* the letter."

"Oh, dear!" said Ralph, "I got to go to bed; I can't hardly keep my eyes open."

"*Can* hardly, Ralph. But why do you say again, 'I got,' instead of 'I have,' when I've explained to you so many times why you should not say it?"

"I meant, I have got."

"But even then, 'got' is entirely unnecessary. The word is so continually misused that the safest way for you young people is not to employ it at all in that way. Put it on your forbidden list and you'll soon—*get* out of the habit of saying it! There! you see I couldn't even finish my own sentence without using the verb in some form."

"Is there anything else you could have said, Mrs. Vincent?"

"Oh, yes; I might have said 'overcome the habit,' or 'learn to avoid' the word, or 'forget to use' it. 'Get' is used correctly in combination with other words to form a new meaning. The most frequent mistakes in respect to it are in using the participle 'got' in addition to

'have,' when it is unnecessary. For its use singly there are so many synonyms that it may just as well be avoided; 'obtain' 'acquire,' 'receive,' or 'gain,' can be substituted for it in some cases, and 'buy' or 'purchase' will cover most of the rest."

"Dr. Johnson is against you, Mamma," said Laura, who was inclined to be a philologist. "He says you may say you 'have got' a thing, and gives as an example, 'The lady has got black eyes.' I thought he was an authority."

"Unfortunately, we have no one absolute authority in our language," answered her mother. "Dr. Johnson wrote more than a hundred years ago, and some expressions sanctioned by him have been abandoned since his time by the common consent of the best writers. I don't think you will find De Quincey, or Landor, or Irving, using 'got' in that sense."

"I'm going to look through them all and see if I can't find one," said Laura. "What will you give me, Mamma, if I do?"

"Find one what, Laura? You didn't say."

"One example of 'has got.'"

"I'll give you a pair of new gloves. That will be economical, for I see you need them very much."

"The next book advertised will be 'A Concordance of Washington Irving, by Miss L. Vincent';" said Emily. "Published by Harper and Brothers, and for sale at all the bookstores."

"You needn't laugh," said Laura. "You may see my name on the outside of a book, yet."

"That's nothing," said Ralph; "I've had my name on the outside of dozens of 'em. Look in my desk and see if I haven't."

"But mine will be printed on the title page, too," said Laura. "Just wait a few years; my time's coming."

"Don't forget what you had among your quotations this morning," remarked her mother. "Dryden says, 'He who proposes to be an *author*, should first be a *student*.'"

"I think I'm not very likely to forget it, Mamma, so long as you continue at the head of the Vincent Institute. We are nothing if not students."



## CHAPTER X.

## MORE MISTAKES.

Education, in the more extensive sense of the word, may comprehend every preparation that is made in our youth for the sequel of our lives. PALEY.

"HAVE you been to the dentist's, yet, Emily?"

"No, Mrs. Vincent; I intended to have gone when I was out this morning, but I forgot it."

"How could you intend to 'have gone'? You intended to go, did you not?"

"Yes; but I thought that when you spoke of it afterward you would use the past tense."

"You must say the thing you mean. You were speaking of your intention when you left the house, and while you were away; that is included in the word 'intended'; but your intention at that time was to go, not to have gone."

"I intended to go, then; but I had so many other things on my mind that *that* was crowded out."

"When you have several things to do, it is a good

plan to make a sort of map of your journey in your mind before you start. Arrange the errands all in the most convenient order, and think them over two or three times in that order; then one will suggest the next. It always seems to me much less tiresome to do many errands at once than to walk a long way to do one."

"Oh, Annty! I mean Mrs. Vincent," said Ruth, bursting into the room, and bringing a rush of cold air with her, "may I go with Ralph just 'round to the square? There's a man there with the funniest monkey!"

"Do you know that you have left the door open, Ruth, and, I judge from my feelings, the front door also?"

"Oh, I was only going to stay a minute. May we go?"

"Will you please to shut the front door, and then come back here? Shut this door after you as you go out."

The little whirlwind did as she was bid, and then came back again. "Now, may I go, Mrs. Vincent?"

"Shut the door, my dear. It is extremely rude to

come into a room where people are sitting, and leave the door open behind you in such weather as this."

"Now it's shut, tight as a drum. *May* we go?"

"Yes; but shut all the doors after you."

"The monkey is probably gone by this time," remarked Laura.

"I hope not," said her mother, "but I shouldn't think it right to encourage Ruth in so selfish a habit, even if she did lose some pleasure by it. I have suffered too much inconvenience from such thoughtlessness in the course of my life not to make an effort to correct it in my dear little Ruthie."

"Is this sentence right, Mrs. Vincent?" inquired Elsie, looking up from a book she was reading. "'The Father of his Country, whom we might suppose would have been above any such weakness'?"

"Certainly not, my dear. How would you alter it?"

"'Who we might suppose.' Isn't that right?"

"Yes, or 'whom we might suppose to have been'; that was probably what your author meant. Then 'whom' would be governed by the active transitive verb 'suppose.'"

"There seems to be no use in me reading this book,"

said Elsie. "I forget one page before I have finished the next."

"That is because you haven't the power of concentrating your mind on what you read, Elsie. You are thinking of other things. But how would you parse 'me' in that sentence? 'No use in me reading'?"

"In the objective case, governed by the preposition 'in.'"

"Then you would say, 'There is no use in me'; which is not what you mean. What would become of 'reading' in that case?"

"Why—I don't exactly know."

"Now suppose you should change 'me' for 'my,' and try it that way."

"There is no use in *my* reading it. We had the same thing in our grammar lesson. There the example was, 'I couldn't account for him doing so in any other way,' instead of 'his doing so.'"

"Where *have* you been, Ralph?" asked Mrs. Vincent of her nephew, who came in looking extremely grimy.

"Oh, nowhere in particular, but it's an awful smoky day, you know."

"So I should judge, from your looks. Now, please,

go to your room and give your face and neck a good washing, and don't forget your hands."

"But I can't find my wash-rag any place. Somebody must have taken it."

"I wish you wouldn't say 'any place,' Ralph, instead of 'anywhere.' I've told you *so* often! I didn't know that there were any wash-rags in my bedrooms. My wash-cloths are all nicely hemmed, or else knit."

"Why, what is it, Aunt Fauny, if it isn't a wash-rag?"

"It is a wash-cloth, and no more a rag than a table-cloth is. I often wonder, when I hear people talk of wash-rags, whether they really use torn pieces of cloth, without hemming."

"Now, Mrs. Vincent, I didn't think you'd go back on your friends like that!" exclaimed Marion.

"My dear Marion," said Mrs. Vincent, "if you knew how disagreeable and offensive such talk is to persons of refinement, I am quite sure that you wouldn't find any pleasure in it. There can scarcely be a greater mistake, in a small matter, than for a young lady to season her speech with slang phrases borrowed from men and boys. Pray, don't think that it will make your conversation attractive to any one of good taste."

"Why, I don't think anything about it, Mrs. Vincent," said Marion.

"That shows how thoroughly you have fallen into a bad habit. If you say such things unconsciously it will be harder to correct yourself of them than if you said them because you thought they were funny."

"But I don't see any harm in them," persisted Marion.

"What harm is there in speaking ungrammatically at any time? Why should we not all say, 'I done it,' and 'I seen him,' provided that every one knows what we mean?"

"Because it would make us seem uneducated and ignorant."

"And the other will make us seem uncultivated and inelegant. Education should show us how to use our beautiful mother-tongue in its utmost purity, and to do all in our power toward keeping it up to a high standard, not helping to drag it down to the level of those below us."

The conversation\*dropped here, but Mrs. Vincent's trials were not over for the day. At the dinner-table she had the mortification of hearing her own daughter say that one of her friends had been "going in" for

something or other, upon which Julia remarked that the said friend was "a regular brick."

"I have been thinking," said Mrs. Vincent, "what I should do to stop this disagreeable habit. I might say that any person who indulged in it at meals should be sent away from the table, but that doing this would punish all the rest of us at the same time. Besides, I should very much prefer that you should correct yourselves. I saw the other day in the list of acknowledgments for St. Luke's Hospital, 'Proceeds of Slang Bank, \$2.85.' Let us establish such a bank here. I will furnish you a box with a slit in the top and you can drop in two cents every time you use an expression which you know to be improper. Are you willing to try it?"

"But who would know whether we did it honestly or not?" asked Ruth.

"You, yourselves. There is nobody here I would not trust to report fairly, though it will need a little effort to remember. You must make it a matter of conscience."

"Hurrah, girls!" said Laura. "Here'll be a good excuse for talking all the slang we can, and pretending it's for the charity."

"I wish, my dear, that you would not try to defeat

my efforts for the good of my pupils. Flippancy is a serious hindrance to anything like improvement. I am in earnest, and I expect all of you, if you adopt the plan at all, to carry it out faithfully and honorably, which implies that you will do your best to overcome the habit."

The girls promised very readily, and, to do them justice, both they and the Hospital were gainers by the arrangement.

"Do look at the rain!" exclaimed Elsie. "It isn't coming down in drops, but actual sheets! I hardly ever remember such a storm."

"That's curious English, Elsie," observed Mrs. Vincent. "One would think from your way of expressing yourself that remembering storms was one of the regular employments of life, and that you seldom practised it."

"It sounds all right to me," said Elsie. "What ought I to say, Mrs. Vincent?"

"I suppose you mean that you hardly remember ever to have seen such a storm. 'Ever' does not qualify 'remember,' but 'to have seen' or 'having seen.'"

"It seems to me," said Julia, "there are more storms here than any place I ever was in."



"More storms than a place, Julia?"

"More than *in* any place I ever saw," said Julia. "I'm afraid it will hinder the girls that are going to play from coming to the musical to-night. Belle Stockton said she'd try to be on time, for once. She seldom or ever is."

"Seldom or *never*; 'seldom or ever' has no meaning. And I wish you would all cure yourselves of the habit of saying 'on time.' 'On time' is a railroad expression, admissible in a train office but quite out of place in social life. You come to school or arrive at a concert-hall *in* time, not *on* it."

"But," said Laura, "you may be 'in time' and yet wait half an hour; but 'on time' means exactly at the minute."

"Then you can say so, if that is what you mean, or you can say 'at the time'; but I think you will find that people generally use the expression merely as synonymous with not being late, as Julia did just now, and not with any reference to punctuality, which means 'at the point of time,' or, in other words, at the appointed hour."

"You don't expect us to remember such small things as that, do you, Mrs. Vincent?" asked Elsie.

"You might as well ask me if I expect you to remember things so small as writing a capital 'I' instead of a small one when you mean yourself, or how many pints make a quart. I expect you to try to remember every thing, and if a thing is not important you may be sure I shall not treat it as if it were. When it is a matter of indifference which of two expressions you use I shall say nothing about them."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Ruth, "I wish I had lived in the dark ages!"

"Why so, Ruth?"

"Because then education was very much neglected!"

"Do you wish education were neglected now? You don't really mean it. Look me straight in the eye and tell me if you do."

"I do really mean it—over the left!"

"Two cents for the poor box!" shouted Ralph. "My eye! Won't it fill up fast, though?"

"Look out for yourself, Mr. Live-in-a-glass-house! Put in your own two cents for your eye. They'll soon be able to build a new hospital entirely out of your contributions."

"That's the figure of speech commonly called hyperbole," said Laura, who was studying rhetoric.

## CHAPTER XI.

## BORROWING, AND SO FORTH.

It is possible to be selfish in the highest degree without being at all too much actuated by self-love, but unduly neglectful of others when your own gratification, of whatever kind, is concerned.

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY.

"I do think Julia Featherly is the most aggravating girl I ever saw," exclaimed Marion, bursting into the room where Miss Darling was sitting, and wearing on her face a look of great annoyance.

"What has she aggravated, Marion?"

"Why, she's aggravated *me*. She's gone and taken my rubbers, and now I can't stir till she comes back, and I wanted to go out so much!"

"I'm sorry she has taken your india-rubbers. By the way, it looked like rain when I went out this morning, so I needed my umbrella, and spent a long time in hunting for it. Where do you think I found it at last?"

"Oh, Miss Darling, I know. You lent it to me, and I didn't return it!"

"Last Tuesday, and this is Saturday."

"I'm sure I'm very sorry. I never thought of it again."

"That is very apt to be the case with people who borrow things. When you borrow an umbrella or a pair of overshoes, you ought to be especially careful to put them where you will notice them and be reminded of their owner. Borrowing things and not returning them is one of the most trying forms of selfishness, because the plea is always ready, 'Oh, I forgot!' which the borrower thinks a sufficient excuse."

"But if Julia had asked me, I should have known what to depend on. She just took them, and never said a word about it."

"Did she know they were yours?"

"Why, no, I don't suppose she did; but she is so careless she never would notice. She'd see a pair that fitted her, and just take it for granted they were hers, without knowing whether they were or not."

"You can make her useful enough to you to pay for all the inconvenience she has caused you."

"How, Miss Darling?"

"By letting this be a warning to you never to treat

any one else so. Did Laura find her algebra this morning?"

"Yes'm."

"Where?"

"She found it in my desk."

"Had you asked her to lend it to you?"

"No; but I had left mine upstairs, and I wanted to look at it just for a minute, and I meant to put it directly back again."

"But you didn't, and Laura spent ten minutes, to my knowledge, in looking for it; how much more I don't know. It doesn't seem to me that that was very different from Julia's taking the india-rubbers."

"But then, you know, Miss Darling, there is such a difference between your doing it to another person, and another person's doing it to you!"

"I think I have noticed that trait in human nature. But to go back to the beginning of our conversation. Do you know what 'aggravate' means?"

"It means to be awfully provoking."

"Look it out in the dictionary."

Marion found it. "'To aggravate; to make worse,'"

said she, "but the second meaning is 'to provoke, to irritate.'"

"I didn't know that it was ever used so," said Miss Darling. "Is there no note about it?"

"Yes," said Marion, reading. "'Aggravate is sometimes improperly used in this sense'; and then afterward it says, 'Probably no example can be cited from a book in which the writer did not intend to exhibit a colloquial, if not vulgar, use.'"

"You can easily see how it came to be used in that way, though," said Laura. "People would be a little angry, and then something would happen to aggravate their anger, and so finally they mixed it all up together."

"My old 'Walker' and 'Johnson' don't even hint at any such meaning," said Miss Darling, who had been looking it up. "I feel quite sure that they would have been indignant at such a perversion of language."

"Here comes Julia," said Marion. "Now I can get out, if it isn't too late. Well, Julia, I hope you enjoyed my rubbers."

"Are these yours?" asked Julia, looking down at them with a puzzled air. "I'm sure I'm very sorry. I thought they were mine as much as could be."

"Mine have a pattern of a shield on the toe, and yours have straight lines running across. Don't you see?"

"I never noticed, but I hope you haven't wanted them. I'm sure, I wouldn't have taken them if I'd known it."

"Miss Darling has been piling up such a heap of sins on my head that it won't do for me to scold," said Marion, laughing. "I wonder if any one else has any accusations to make."

"I think I remember lending you a car-ticket, some time ago," said Mrs. Vincent, who had come in during the discussion, "and I don't remember your returning it."

"Oh, Mrs. Vincent! So you did! I'm fearfully ashamed! I'll go and get it now."

"You needn't do that," replied Mrs. Vincent. "I hope you don't think I mention these things because I'm anxious about my property. It is because I want you to form the habit of being very scrupulous as to borrowing and returning. I don't dare to remind the day-scholars of the tickets and five-cent pieces they borrow, for fear of their misunderstanding me; but I feel so responsible for you girls who are in my house that I

must run the risk. It is so unlady-like to borrow little matters with a promise of returning them, and then to forget all about it, that I can't bear to see you get into the habit of it. You know I would give you a dozen tickets if you asked me for them, and never think of them again."

"I don't believe there's any danger of our thinking you 'mean,' Mrs. Vincent," said Elsie. "You can trust to our discernment enough for that."

"I wish I could trust equally to your following out my precepts, Elsie," said Mrs. Vincent, as she left the room.

"There's Eva Jones just going by the window," exclaimed Laura in a tone of enthusiasm. "Look at her, Miss Darling; isn't she perfectly lovely? I think she's as pretty as she can be!"

"I think we are all as pretty as we *can* be, Laura," answered Miss Darling. "Don't you think that is a rather unmeaning expression?"

"No," said Laura. "It means a great deal to me. I think she is just the prettiest girl I ever saw."

"Do leave out that unnecessary 'just,' Laura! You girls have grown into a habit of saying it until it be-



comes extremely tiresome. I hear of things being 'just delightful,' and 'just perfect,' and 'just sweet,' until I am sick of the sound of it."

"Well, Miss Darling, without any *justice*, don't you think Eva is the prettiest girl in school?"

"I'm not sure that I do; but that is a point about which we can 'agree to differ.'"

"Are either of you going out this morning?" inquired Laura, addressing the twins.

"Does 'either' mean one, or more than one, Laura?" said Miss Darling.

"Why, it means one or the other."

"And is 'one' singular or plural?"

"*One* is singular. Oh, I know what you mean, but really I can't say 'Is either of you going?' That would be asking too much of me."

"Then you can say 'either one.' The 'one' is redundant, but it takes away what appears to you to be the awkwardness of it, though that difficulty is only imaginary. What you must *not* do is to say 'either are,' because that would be asking too much of *me*."

"You see, Laura, it's no use you trying to get round

Miss Darling," remarked Elsie. "She'll always come out ahead."

"How much do you owe the slang-bank for that speech, Elsie? I don't think that 'getting round' and 'coming out ahead' of people can be classed among legitimate English expressions."

"You can call it four cents, if you like, Miss Darling. I don't mind. It all goes to the hospital."

"But I do mind your attacks on the English language. How would you parse 'It's no use you trying'?"

"I give it up; I think I'd better not try. It's a quite impossible sentence."

"Then, please, turn it into a possible one."

"There's no use in your trying it."

"Yes; or, 'It is of no use to try.' Either is correct."

"Hadn't you better write it down, Elsie?" said Ruth, who was taken to task so often for her shortcomings that she enjoyed a chance of laughing at some one else.

"How would you parse 'had better,' Ruth?" returned Elsie. "The glass in your house is so brittle I could shatter it by just looking hard at it."

"Oh, I'm *too* glad I don't study grammar!" exclaimed Ruth. "Luckily, I don't have to parse things."

"But you can learn to speak correctly without that," said Mrs. Vincent, who had returned while the conversation was going on. "'Would' or 'might' are the words that are used in that sense with 'better'; not 'had.'"

"'Wouldn't you better?' How perfectly ridiculous that sounds!" said Ruth.

"You are mistaken about that. 'Hadn't you write' would be the ridiculous thing, which is what is left when you leave out the adverb 'better.' But there are always ways of managing such expressions. You may say, 'Wouldn't it be better to write,' or 'Might you not better write.'"

"How long do you think it will take her to forget that, Mrs. Vincent—five minutes?" asked Marion, as Ruth went bounding out of the room.

"Perhaps so," answered Mrs. Vincent; "but when she has heard it fifty times she will probably remember it, and you know it is only the large girls who are expected to remember anything after once telling! With little ones it has to be 'line upon line, line upon line; precept upon precept, precept upon precept.'"

"Where does that come from, Mrs. Vincent? It

must have been written by some one who knew all about children."

"And grown people, too. It was said by the prophet Isaiah to the Jews, some twenty-five hundred years ago, and you see that human nature hasn't changed materially since then. It is the same old story still, and will be, I suppose, to the end."

## CHAPTER XII.

## SMALL COURTESIES.

Trifles make the sum of human things.

HANNAH MORE.

Every action in company ought to be with some sign of respect to those present.

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

"WE will have an oral composition to-day," said Mrs. Vincent one morning when the "ten-minute composition" class had assembled. "You need not take out your copy-books."

"What is 'oral,' Mrs. Vincent?"

"What is it, Louisa?"

"Oral is what is spoken; not written."

"How can we have a composition that is not written?" asked a new pupil.

"You will see. I will appoint Evelyn Walters to take down the heads of our composition and make a report of it afterward. Our subject will be 'Small Courtesies'; I will take the girls in order, as they sit, and we shall make up the composition as we go along. Amy, what are 'courtesies'?"

"Acts of politeness."

"Mary, where are the places for showing courtesy?"

"At home, at school, at a party, in a street car,—"

"Can you think of any other place, Ellen?" asked Mrs. Vincent, as Mary paused in her enumeration.

"At a concert, at church, when you meet people in the street, —"

"Anywhere else, Julia?"

"In a railroad car, in a store,—I don't know any more places."

"I think we have enough, except that no one has mentioned a friend's house during a visit. As the little acts of courtesy are almost infinite in number, we will notice only instances of the lack of courtesy, and will take one place at a time, so that there will be some method in our work. First, at home; Fanny, can you give me an instance of want of courtesy there?"

"Interrupting older people when they are speaking."

"That is a very common fault, and one that may occur not only at home but in nearly every other place we have mentioned. Emily, can you think of one that belongs especially to home manners?"

"Coming down late to meals."

"Helen, another?"

"Leaving the doors open when you find them shut."

"Jenny?"

"Walking out of the door before a visitor, or going up stairs first."

"Margaret?"

"Taking other people's things for your own convenience and not returning them."

"Marion?"

"Keeping on with your reading when older people come into the room, and not taking notice of them."

"Now, Harriet?"

"Playing with your napkin-ring or finger-glass at the table."

"Next!"

"Looking as if you didn't want to do something that anybody asks you to do."

"Evelina?"

"Reading other people's postal cards, or making remarks on their letters."

"What can you add, Carrie?"

"Calling up and down stairs to people, or shouting in halls, or whistling, if you are a boy."

The girls laughed at this, but Mrs. Vincent said, "Carrie is not far wrong in putting that in, for in families where the girls are ill-bred the boys are pretty sure to be the same. The training in manners is generally about equal for both. Julia, it is your turn now."

"Opening or shutting a window without consulting others, or pulling the shades up and down when there are older people in the room."

Two or three of the girls cast stolen glances at each other at this illustration, for they knew that Julia had learned that and many other points of manners from Mrs. Vincent, never, apparently, having been instructed in them before; but as Julia did not see the sidewise looks there was no harm done.

"Suppose we go on to school-manners, leaving out any instances of discourtesy which have been mentioned that apply to home and to other places equally. Amelia, can you mention anything?"

"Looking round at any one who is found fault with."

"Next."

"Answering out of turn."

"Annie?"

"Pushing before others when we are going out."



"Mary?"

"Disputing and squabbling, instead of letting things go."

"Catherine?"

"Talking as if we hated to come to school, and would be glad when it was over."

"I shall be glad when all school-girls remember that this is a point of good manners," said Mrs. Vincent. "They are often so rude about it that their teachers are *ashamed* to reprove them, if you can understand such a feeling. Many girls who are well brought up in other respects seem to have no delicacy on this point, so that I think it must come sometimes from thoughtlessness, as well as low-breeding. Edith, what have you?"

"Not paying attention when a teacher is talking to you."

"That is rude, everywhere," said Mrs. Vincent. "You often meet people in company whose eyes are wandering about the room while they are talking to you, as if they were looking for some person they would rather be with, or as if they were longing to get away from you. I hope you will all be careful not to be among the wandering-eyed people in society. And I hope on the other hand,

you will remember in your classes that it is quite as impolite to be inattentive to your teachers as to persons you meet in other places. Well, Amy?"

"Trying to get the best seat at recitation, and always jumping into it if you happen to get into the room first."

"Helen?"

"Contradicting people, and not stopping when you are told to stop."

"Now, Celia."

"Not saying 'thank you' or looking at a teacher when she hands you your exercise-books or anything belonging to you."

"Rosa?"

"Examining your hands and nails in a class, as if you thought something was the matter with them."

At this all the girls laughed, for it was a point so frequently brought up that it had come to be regarded almost as a joke by the pupils, while to their teachers it was a serious offence against the laws of common politeness. "What have you to say, Anna?" continued Mrs. Vincent.

"Correcting a wrong answer in the class instead of leaving it for the teacher to do."

"Marianne?"

"Making remarks on other girls' dresses."

Just at this moment Ruth came in on an errand, and Mrs. Vincent explained to her the nature of the lesson and asked for a contribution. Ruth thought a minute and then said with much emphasis, "Saying you won't play, when there's a game that all the rest like." And after she had gone out of the room she put her head back to add, "Not wiping your muddy boots on the mat when you come in!"

"Oh, Mrs. Vincent, I know something!" exclaimed Fauny Gray.

"What is it, Fanny?"

"Going out and leaving the front door wide open, to fill the house with cold air and give some one the trouble of coming out to shut it."

"And I know something, too, that nobody has thought of," said Mrs. Vincent, "but which gives a great deal of unnecessary trouble. Who can remember it first?"

"I can guess," said Laura. "Tearing paper into little bits and throwing it on the floor instead of into the waste-basket."

"Yes," said her mother; "that is what I was think-

ing of. I wonder, sometimes, what the mothers of these young ladies would say if such things were done in their halls and parlors. And yet I like to see my rooms in good order quite as well as those ladies do theirs. Then there is another thing sometimes done which is so low-bred that I am ashamed to mention it; something worse than the paper because it is more lasting."

Several blushes rose to several cheeks at this hint, and one of the offenders said, "Writing your name or anything else on the desks."

"Imagine any young girl visiting your mother's house and writing her name or scribbling in ink on handsome ash furniture! What would be thought of such a guest? These desks were beautiful when they were new; now one can tell by walking among them which have been occupied by ill-mannered girls; and unfortunately, in changing seats from time to time, one is obliged to give these defaced desks to young ladies who would as soon think of carving names in a hostess's furniture as of doing anything so rude in a school-room."

"You don't say anything about the ink spots, Mrs.

Vincent," said one of the new pupils, whose desk was ornamented with stains of various shapes and sizes.

"Part of the spots come from careless habits which have been formed at home and are difficult to overcome. But you know we are not talking now of habits of order, but of courtesy. When you deface or injure articles belonging to me 'because it's only a school,' then I think you discourteous. Has any one another instance?"

"Keeping on talking when you're asked to be quiet out of school-hours," said Elsie.

"Going into a class-room where the door is shut and leaving it open after you," added Emily.

"Both these are to the point," answered Mrs. Vincent. "But now our time is nearly up, and we must leave courtesies belonging to other places for another day. Evelyn, you may read your notes, making the sentences as connected as you can."

"Courtesies are acts of politeness, and may be shown at home, at school, in the street, in public conveyances, at church, or at friends' houses. It is impolite to interrupt people when they are speaking, to come down late to meals, to leave doors open behind you, to push for-

ward before older people, to borrow things and not return them until you are asked for them, to let your older friends come into the room without taking any notice of them, to play with your napkin-ring or finger-glass, not to do things pleasantly when you are asked, to read postal cards unless you are allowed to, to call up and down stairs instead of going to find the person you want, to alter windows or shades without leave, or to do anything in general that is disagreeable to other people. That's all about home manners, but I think they might have put in drumming on the table with your fingers, or humming when there are other people with you. It's so disagreeable!"

"How well she did it!" exclaimed Sue Merriam. "I'm sure I never could have written them down so fast and read them off so straight."

"I only put down a few words," said Evelyn, "and then I add the rest as I read."

"Evelyn has done it before, though not on this subject," said Mrs. Vincent. "That was my reason for selecting her. It needs only a little practice. Now, Evelyn, let us have your *résumé* of defects in school-manners."

"It is rude to turn round and stare at any one whom the teacher is reproving, to answer out of your turn, to crowd in front of others, to talk as if you hated school and wished there wasn't any, to be inattentive when a teacher is talking, to make for the best seat at recitation, to contradict others and not stop when you're told to do so, to take things from a teacher (or anybody else, I should think), without saying 'Thank you'; to look at your hands and nails in the company of others; to burst out with a correction when one of the girls answers wrongly; to make remarks on people's dresses; to hold back when the rest want to do something; to bring mud into the house on your boots just to save the trouble of wiping them on the mat; to go out and leave the front door wide open after you; to throw down scraps of paper on the floor for somebody else to pick up; and, of all things, to write your name or anything else on the desks."

"Your report is very satisfactory, Evelyn," said Mrs. Vincent. "Is that all of it?"

"Except that it is rude to go on talking when you are desired to stop, even out of school hours, and that it is not polite to pass through a school room and leave the

doors open' behind you. But there's another thing nobody has said. When any older person drops something on the floor, some of the young ones ought to pick it up and hand it to her."

"Why, don't they always?" asked Emily.

"Not invariably," said Mrs. Vincent, "though there is usually an instinct of politeness which makes young people do it, almost before they think of it. Sometimes the little ones forget; they are so intent on their own affairs. Now, Evelyn, we are much obliged to you for your lecture, and will try to profit by your suggestions. The class is excused."



## CHAPTER XIII.

## STILL LEARNING.

The only true conquests—those which awaken no regrets—are those obtained over our ignorance.

NAPOLÉON I.

He who has a superlative for everything wants a measure for the great or small.

LAVATER.

"It is very cold this morning, Ruth," said Mrs. Vincent to her little sunbeam one bright winter's day; "you must put on your thick coat when you go out to play."

"Won't my sack do equally as well?" asked Ruth. "I hate my big coat."

"It isn't worth while to 'hate' comfortable clothes, my dear, which your friends have provided for you. But you shouldn't say 'equally *as* well'; leave out the *as*."

"Why, I always say 'equally as well,'" exclaimed Elsie, in a surprised tone.

"Does that make it right, Elsie?"

"Oh, no; but I can't see what's wrong about it."

“‘Equally well’ means ‘as well as’; by saying ‘equally *as* well’ you get three *ases* in, instead of two. One of the words is unnecessary; ‘as well’ or ‘equally well’ will, either of them, answer every purpose.”

“Ruth looks like a little polar bear,” remarked Laura, when the small woman had struggled into her warm garment and left the room. “And that reminds me of a dream I had last night. I’d been wondering, before I went to bed, what I would dream—”

“Do you mean that you wondered what you *wanted* to dream, Laura?” asked her mother. “That would be the meaning of what you said.”

“I wondered what I *should* dream; is that better? Well, I thought it might be something about geology, because I had been studying it the last thing before I went to bed, and it seemed as if I had hardly closed my eyes before I was in the middle of the ocean with Emily; I don’t know whether we were on a boat or not—that didn’t seem to show; but right in front of us—”

“Not left in front of you?”

“Straight before us there was a huge pterodactyl or rhamphorhynchus or something,—”

“Perhaps it was a megalithoscope,” suggested Julia,

who had only lately become acquainted with that instrument.

"No, it wasn't a mega—anything. The creature was standing exactly on the very end of its tail, and making for Emily and I as fast as it could come—"

"Oh, Laura! For I!"

"For Emily and me, I mean, and we clung to one another in a cold shiver of misery. On it came, nearer and nearer, until we could see its big eyes just as plain as I see you—"

"Thank you for seeing us *plain*; perhaps we may be plain—very likely we are—but we don't fancy being told so!"

"Well, he was plain enough, and I saw him plainly, too; and just as he came so near that he could almost touch us, he suddenly sunk down—"

"Sank down."

"Sank down and utterly disappeared, and the water all turned to glass and we were standing on it waltzing round for joy to think we had got clear of him!"

"Trust you for dreaming about dancing," said Marion. "I've heard that nothing shows character quicker than a dream."

"What part of speech is 'quicker,' Marion?"

"Quicker is an adjective, in the comparative degree."

"And what did you make it qualify?"

"Shows, I suppose, so I must have thought it was an adverb, but it ain't."

"My dear, I thought you had cured yourself of saying 'ain't.'"

"I thought so too; but anyway, Mrs. Vincent, Mr. Trollope's and Mrs. Oliphant's people are always saying 'ain't.'"

"That doesn't make it any more agreeable to hear an American girl, who knows better, say it," answered Mrs. Vincent; "you needn't copy any one's inelegancies. A certain class of well-educated English people have a set of slang words which it amuses them to use, but we are not bound to follow them. I want you to learn to speak, as nearly as possible, with absolute correctness according to the best standards, and I hope that in the course of time bad English will *grate* on your ears as it does on mine."

"There is some hope of me, Mrs. Vincent," said Elsie. "Yesterday when I heard a lady say 'I expect he did,' I assure you it made my hair stand on end."

"Well," said Laura, "that's better than trying to be so awfully correct as Mrs. Xenophon, who says, 'She was a woman whom I thought was honest, but it turned out quite the reverse.'"

"Don't be personal, Laura," remarked her mother. "There is no occasion for mentioning names. I think Mrs. Xenophon knows too much to use such an expression as 'awfully correct.'"

"She does try to be it, though, mamma. She says—" here Laura stopped, warned by a look from her mother. "Well, I won't say what she says *now*, but some time when nobody's thinking of her I'll say 'I heard a lady say.' It is too immensely funny for anything."

"Try to be more moderate in your expressions, Laura. You use up all the strong ones on trifles, so there is nothing more intense left for really thrilling occurrences. 'Immensely and enormously' have grown to mean just the same as 'very' with you girls, and it makes your conversation monotonous."

Here the topic was dropped, having been discussed so often that there seemed really nothing further to be said on the subject. In the afternoon Emily had a call from a young friend, who was shown into the room where Mrs. Vincent was sitting.

"Mrs. Vincent," said she, "allow me to introduce you to my friend, Miss Ellen Sawyer."

Mrs. Vincent welcomed Miss Ellen Sawyer in due form, but took occasion afterward to instruct Emily in the etiquette of introductions.

"You must always introduce a younger person to an older one, not the older to the younger; so you must introduce a gentleman to a lady, not a lady to a gentleman, unless the lady is very young and the gentleman not very young. The one to whom most respect or courtesy is due is the one to whom the other must be presented."

"Can't you say 'I was introduced to a gentleman'?" asked Laura. "It sounds natural."

"As a young girl you may, certainly," replied her mother; "but after you are a young lady in society it will be more correct to say that the gentleman was introduced to you, unless he is considerably older than yourself. In that case your humility will come in very well in speaking of yourself as the less important person."

"Don't you think these gloves go nicely with my suit, Mrs. Vincent?" asked Elsie one day, displaying her purchases. "One of the salesladies reserved them for

me till I could take a piece of the cloth to match them by. I was sure they were just the thing."

"They are very pretty, and match your suit perfectly," said Mrs. Vincent, "but please don't talk about 'salesladies'! I really can't hear that word with any patience."

"Why, that's what they all call them at the store, Mrs. Vincent. There is a notice posted up at Fielding and Lewis's, 'Salesladies will not be allowed to exchange goods without first reporting at the office.'"

"I'm sorry to hear it," said Mrs. Vincent. "I thought Fielding and Lewis were superior to those vulgarisms. There is no such word as 'saleslady' any more than there is 'salesgentleman.' 'Saleswoman' is a regular English word like salesman or sempstress or washerwoman, and means a person practising a certain business. Some of the best women in the world are proud of being good horsewomen. How would they like to be called 'horse-ladies'? There is no question of ladyhood, and it seems as if the effort to introduce it must have been made by low-bred people who thought there was something discreditable in a woman's earning her living as clerk in a store. At any rate, I don't want to hear any one in my house talking of 'salesladies.'"

"There was a gentleman boarding at the same house where we did at L." said Marion, "who always spoke of giving his clothes to his washerlady. And he was a real nice gentleman, too."

"Marion, Marion! Do you want to discourage me utterly? 'A real nice gentleman!' What kind of talk do you call that?"

"Well, he was a very gentlemanly person, and had very good manners."

"Probably his calling her by that name arose from his kindness of heart. He wanted to be polite and respectful to all, rich and poor alike, which is praiseworthy in the highest degree; but washerwoman is a very respectable name, and it is quite unnecessary to improve on it."



## CHAPTER XIV.

## CORRECTING COMPOSITIONS.

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,  
As those move easiest who have learned to dance;  
'Tis not enough no harshness gives offense;  
The sound must seem an echo to the sense.

POPE.

"I HAVE several letters among the compositions this week," said Miss Blank, when the girls were assembled on Friday morning to hear their compositions criticised, "and there are some mistakes which occur so frequently that I want to warn you against them. In the first place, you should never apologize for your letters and call them stupid and uninteresting. Leave that for your friend to think if she is disposed to do so, but don't suggest it. That is too much like what is called in conversation 'fishing for a compliment.' If you write about things that interest yourselves, your friends will not be likely to find your letters dull, and in any case it is not for you so to characterize them. Don't fill up your space with details which can not by any possibility be of interest

to any one. For instance, one which I have here has fully a page occupied in this way: 'We left Chicago at at 9:15 on Thursday morning, and arrived in Detroit a little after 5. We had supper there, and at 7:30 we went on board the boat for Cleveland. We reached Cleveland the next day, and having had enough of water-travelling, got on board the cars for Buffalo at 9:15.'

"This is a specimen of the whole letter, and is absolutely without interest. If the writer had described the incidents of her journey, or even the scenery she passed, she might have made a bright, readable account.

"Another mistake is made in signing yourselves 'truly' or 'sincerely,' without adding 'yours.' 'Sincerely, Julia Jones.' 'Truly, Mary Smith.' Of course she is truly Mary Smith! What else could she be, if that is her name? Always write 'yours truly,' or 'sincerely yours,' or whatever form you choose to employ.

"In writing to any one, even your most intimate friend, never omit to read over your letter carefully when you have finished it. You may appear ignorant of things you know perfectly well in regard to spelling and punctuation, merely from the kind of carelessness called

a slip of the pen,' to which even careful writers are sometimes liable. Every one should have a dictionary on her writing-table; not necessarily an unabridged, but a little handy-volume to which she can refer when she is puzzled as to the proper spelling of a word."

"I think letters are the hardest things in the world to write," remarked Alma Lloyd. "I'd rather write two compositions than one letter."

"Oh, I wouldn't," exclaimed Rosalie Vaughan. "I'm always glad when letter-week comes. It's just as easy!"

"That sentence is unfinished, Rosalie."

"Oh, Miss Blank, you know what I mean."

"Yes, I know what you mean. The secret of good letter-writing lies in the ability to put yourself in your correspondent's place and *feel* what he or she would like most to be told, and I think you have the art of doing that, so the work to you is a pleasant one."

"But suppose one hasn't the art of doing it; what is to become of her, Miss Blank?" inquired May Leffingwell.

"There is a Bible rule which applies here, as it does everywhere else in life: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Ask your-

self what you would like to hear. Stop a minute, and think, 'If she were here and I were there, what should I want her to write about?' Then something worth saying will be sure to suggest itself."

"And then, what if no ideas come, after all your thinking and trying?"

"Keep on writing letters until they do come. 'Practice makes perfect,' in that as in everything else. Now I will leave the letters for the present, and go on with the compositions. Here is one on 'Spring,' beginning, 'The associations with which the coming of spring are connected—'

"Is connected."

"Why?"

"Because 'coming' is the nominative; and not 'associations.'"

"Another: 'Trifling acts of kindness which seldom cost the giver but little trouble.'"

"Leave out 'seldom.'"

"Or, 'seldom cost the giver much trouble.' Here is a letter: 'I stayed home all day and enjoyed myself ever so much.'"

"Stayed at home and enjoyed myself very much."

“‘The name of Lord Macaulay is among the most distinguished of English historians.’”

“I don’t see anything wrong about that,” said Lucy.

“A name is not a historian. You must say ‘Lord Macaulay is among the most distinguished historians’; or, ‘the name is one of the most distinguished among those of historians.’”

“Some one says, ‘The observance of small courtesies are a distinguishing mark of a true lady or gentleman.’”

“‘Is a distinguishing mark.’”

“Here is a composition on egotism. ‘There is nothing that makes a person so easily disliked as egotism.’ That is a rather novel idea. I don’t remember the feeling of disliking things easily; I have disliked them somewhat, or very much, or always, but never easily. How could that sentence be amended?”

“There is nothing so sure to make a person disliked, as egotism.”

“That is better. Is there any fault to be found with this? ‘I have never seen two that look anything alike.’”

“That look at all alike.”

“Why?”

“Because ‘anything’ is a noun and can not qualify an adjective.”

“ ‘Wild animals are dangerous, but some people take great delight in hunting them, but often the men are killed or badly injured themselves.’ ”

“That sounds all right to me,” said Mattie Waring, to whom Miss Blank appealed for a criticism.

“Does it sound right to all of you?”

“Not exactly,” said another, “but I can’t see how to alter it.”

“I know,” said Florence Mayne; “you oughtn’t to have two ‘buts’ in the same sentence.”

“That’s right,” replied her teacher. “What can you put in the place of one of them?”

“Though,” “yet,” and “however,” were suggested, and after some discussion the best reading was decided to be, “It often happens, however, that the hunters themselves are killed or badly injured.”

“ ‘Beacon lights are put on a hill to guide ships, and are often meddled with by bad men who wish to mislead them.’ Does this mean that the bad men wish to mislead the lights?”

“No; they want to mislead the ships.”

“But that is not clearly stated. Another sentence reads: ‘Her attention was attracted by the light being moved.’ ”

"I don't see why that's wrong," said the writer.

"Was it the light, or its being moved, that attracted the spectator?"

"It was its being moved; she was always used to seeing it in the same place."

"'Its being moved' is right; now don't you see?"

"Oh, 'light' ought to be in the possessive case!"

"Certainly. The light's being moved attracted her attention. That is the same kind of mistake made by ignorant people when they say, 'There is no use in me going'; 'I don't like him staying out so late'; 'She spoke of me writing, but I told her I couldn't.'"

"I wish you'd read us some nice compositions, Miss Blank, and not just all the mistakes," said Nina Hawkesworth.

"So I would if you had come together for an hour's amusement, Nina, but if you want to improve your style and learn to write correctly, the only way is to have the faults pointed out, and if we do that there is no time for anything else. I have one very pretty composition, though, that I should like to read to you, but there is not time for it to-day. I must finish the list I have prepared."

“ ‘Night is the pleasantest part of a sleeping-car.’ I don’t think night can be called part of a car; at least it doesn’t seem so to me.”

“Night is the time you enjoy most in a sleeping car,” said Penelope Piper. “I don’t think so, myself, but that would make good grammar of it.”

“Isn’t all grammar good, Pen.?”

“Good English, I suppose I ought to say, but it will never seem natural.”

“It will seem natural if you say it often enough. This same writer seems to have a talent for making remarkable statements. She says, ‘Travelling is useful for several reasons. It is a good place to exercise patience in.’ Now, why should travelling be called a place?”

“It affords a good opportunity of exercising patience,” said the writer.

“That is right. In the same composition I find the statement: ‘Mother never thought of me being out all night.’”

“Of my being out!” exclaimed a dozen voices at once.

“Ah! I’m glad to see that you’ve learned to recognize those double objectives. How do you like this: ‘There were no end to the uses that her talents were applied to.’”



"There *was* no end," said Mabel Joy.

"Do you think a sentence ought to end with a preposition, Miss Blank?" inquired Ethel Godwin. Like, 'her talents were applied to?'"

"That matter has been discussed a great many times, Ethel. Some writers think it inelegant and some defend it; but I believe the majority are in favor of an occasional use of it. I have seen instances given where that construction added great force to the expression. I suppose you have all heard of the teacher who said to her pupils 'a preposition is never a proper word to end a sentence with!'"

After the girls had had their laugh at this, Miss Blank went on with an extract from a composition on "Music."

"'One way that music uses her power is to soothe suffering.'"

"In which she uses her power," was suggested.

"That is better, but do you think it is euphonious to say, 'One way in which music uses her power is to soothe?'"

"'In soothing' would sound better, because it's like 'in which.'"

"What does 'euphonious' mean, Miss Blank?"

“Having an agreeable sound. Many sentences which are perfectly grammatical are not euphonious, and in speaking or writing we must try to be agreeable as well as correct, just as in dressing ourselves we want clothes that are not only whole and clean, but becoming.”

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE KING'S ENGLISH.

In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold,  
Alike fantastic if too new or old;  
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,  
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

POPE.

Oh, to watch  
The thirsty plants imbibing!

TENNYSON.

"HERE, Mamma," said Laura one afternoon, looking up in pretended triumph from a book she was reading, "here's an English author who says she was having 'a real good time.'"

"Doesn't she say, 'as they say in America'?" inquired her mother.

"No, she doesn't say a word about it."

"Who is it?"

"Miss Isabella Bird, the traveller, who has been 'doing' the Malay Peninsula."

"And doesn't she put the phrase in quotation-marks?"

"Oh, yes; I didn't mention that. She *does* put it in quotation-marks."

"I thought so; she had been travelling in America before, and had learned it here. It wouldn't surprise me if the English should end by adopting it altogether, without the 'real'; they seem to use it very often, as an Americanism."

"Why isn't an Americanism as good as an Englishism?" asked Ralph.

"An American vulgarism is as good as an English vulgarism," answered his aunt, "but good English is the same in both countries, and when we say an Americanism, we mean something that is not good English, and that's what we must try to avoid."

"Here's another something," said Laura. "I don't know exactly what you would call it. 'I saw a man whom they thought was dead.'"

"That is an error in grammar, pure and simple," said Mrs. Vincent. "Does Miss Bird say that?"

"No, it's somebody else; I don't know who."

"What would you say?" asked Elsie.

"Leave out 'they thought,' which does not affect the meaning, and you will see. It would read, 'The man whom was dead.'"

"Oh, yes, I see," said Elsie. "They meant, 'The

man whom they thought dead.' That makes it all straight."

"Where ever is that pencil of mine?" inquired Rath, bustling about in great excitement. "I can never find it where I put it."

"I saw it laying on your desk in school to-day," said Ralph. "Just as like as not it's there now."

"You saw it doing *what*, Ralph?" asked Laura.

"Laying on her desk; lying, I mean."

"Ralph," said Mrs. Vincent, "don't you try to correct yourself of that habit? Or what is the reason that you go on saying the same thing day after day?"

"Why, Aunt Fanny, I don't think anything about it. I wouldn't say it if I thought of it."

"If you cared enough about it you would think of it. After this if I hear you say 'lay' or 'laying' when you ought to say 'lie' or 'lying,' I shall send you to bed a quarter of an hour earlier in the evening."

"Then I may as well make up my mind to it now," said Ralph, "for I know I never shall remember."

"You made another mistake in grammar, and Ruth still another," said Mrs. Vincent, "but 'laying' was so much worse that I came near forgetting them. You

said, 'As like as not.' Do you think that is correct?"

"Yes, ma'am; I don't see anything wrong about it."

"What do you say, Ruth?"

"I know! It ought to be 'as likely as not.' Now what did I say, Aunty?"

"You said 'Where ever is my book?' There's a word too much in that. See if you can correct it, Ralph."

"*Where* is my book; not *ever*. Now, Ruth, I'm even with you."

"You're welcome. Oh, Mrs. Vincent, you said you'd take Ralph and I to the Museum some afternoon. Won't you go to-day?"

"I have three excellent reasons for not going. In the first place, I shall not take any one who talks about taking 'I'; in the second place, I should be ashamed to be seen in the company of a little girl who says '*museum*,' instead of '*museum*;' and, in the third place, I have another engagement."

"The last may be a good reason, but I call the others very poor ones," said Ruth, who was as much of a rogue as ever.

"I should have liked to have lived in the time of

Louis XIV.," exclaimed Laura, who was apt to talk about what she was reading, "and to have been one of the court ladies. What perfectly splendid presents they used to have!"

"You wouldn't have liked to be one of the peasants whose labor made it possible for the king to be so 'generous,' as it was called," said her mother; "or rather according to your way of stating things, you wouldn't have liked to have been one of the poor people."

"Why, what did I say, Mamma?"

"That you would have liked to have lived at that time. I suppose you meant that you would have liked to live then, or that you now wish to have been living then; but I think you are much better off as you are."

"Well," said Laura, "I don't believe I shall ever learn to speak what *you* call correctly, Mamma, if I lived to be a hundred!"

"Why not, Laura?"

"Well, when you get used to saying a thing, it seems all right to you, and you can't stop and parse every single sentence in your mind before you say it."

"Nor the double sentences?"

"Well, you know what I mean, Mamma."

"But if you once make up your mind that a certain arrangement of words is incorrect, it won't sound right to you."

"Well, but suppose you make up your mind ever so much, and you don't notice it after all?"

"I'll tell you what I do notice. How do you think you have begun every one of your last four or five sentences?"

"I'm sure I don't know. How did I?"

"With 'well.' I have often thought I would count your 'wells'; but I don't think of it until after you have made some progress. I counted four just now."

"Well, but—"

Here Laura was interrupted by a burst of laughter from the children who had been listening to the dialogue; so she modified her remark into "Anyway, everybody says it."

"Not quite everybody, Laura," said her mother, "though it is a habit unfortunately very easy to fall into. When I was a little girl, I was visiting in a family of highly cultivated people, and I remember hearing one of the ladies say that they had found so much trouble in getting rid of it that when any one of



them began a sentence with 'Well,' the others all called out, 'Pump!'

"Well, Mamma," began Laura again, and was again interrupted by a shout of "Pump!"

"You may pump me all you want to," said she, good-humoredly, "but I don't believe you'll ever cure me."

"*Well*," said Ralph, with great emphasis, "we'll try."

"*Lay* it to heart, Ralph," said his cousin.

"There goes Matilda Brewster," said Marion. "Doesn't she look prettily to-day?"

"How can she look prettily, Marion?" asked Mrs. Vincent. "Is she a prettily girl?"

"No, ma'am; she's a pretty girl, and so she looks prettily."

"If you thought from her looks that she was cold, would you say she looked coldly?"

"No; I should say she looked cold."

"The same rule applies here. Where the manner of looking is what you are talking about, you use an adverb to express it, as 'I looked carefully'; 'she looked casually'; 'he looked steadfastly'; but if you mean to describe a person or thing, you use an adjective. 'He looked anxious'; 'the flowers smell sweet.'"

"Oh, how warm it is here!" exclaimed Ruth. "Can't I open the door, Mrs. Vincent?"

"I think you are able to do it, Ruth."

"Oh, I mean mayn't I?"

"If the others don't object. How is it with you, Julia?"

"I'd like it," answered Julia. "I don't like a room too warm."

"Does anybody?" inquired Laura. "That's begging the question."

"Laura is a logician, you see, Julia," said Mrs. Vincent. "It is a matter of course that we don't like things too warm or too cold, or too near, or too far off; the very meaning of the word is that the quality is in excess of our liking. You often hear people say at table, 'I don't like things too salt'; which is another way of saying, 'I don't like things as I don't like them.'"

"Did you bring down that letter you promised to show us, Julia?" asked Emily.

"No, I left it upstairs in one of my bureau draws," answered Julia. "I'll go and get it."

"How do you spell 'draws,' Julia?" asked Mrs. Vincent.

"D-r-a-w-s, I suppose; isn't it?"

"No; you mean drawers, which are the things made to draw out from the bureau. Many people call them 'draws,' and seem to think that the word is spelt in that way, but it's a mistake. I will tell you an old riddle that may help to fix it in your memory. 'What's the difference between the ancient slaves and the appliances of modern washstands? The former were hewers of wood and drawers of water, and the latter are drawers of wood and ewers of water!'"

"I guess it was an Englishman who wrote that, wasn't it, Mamma?" asked Laura.

"I suppose so; but though you may guess a riddle, you are not allowed to 'guess' that a thing has happened. 'Guess' is only properly used where a real or imaginary riddle is presented. . It is often used in this country as meaning 'I think,' or 'I imagine,' and so there is a prejudice against it in the minds of most well-educated people; but in its legitimate sense it is a perfectly correct word."

"I shan't forget 'drawers' now, I don't think," said Julia, as she departed in search of the letter.

"I thought you'd pounce on those double negatives

Mamma," said Laura, when Julia had left the room.

"I don't want to make Julia's life a burden to her by continual criticism," answered her mother. "When I had induced her to leave off saying, 'We come there last year,' and 'I see him yesterday,' I felt that I'd done all I could for the time, and was willing to wait awhile before attacking the next set of mistakes. There's no use in trying to teach people everything at once."

"Oh, Mrs. Vincent!" said Ruth, who had been listening with all her ears, "I've caught you now! You forgot and said 'I done it.'"

Mrs. Vincent laughed and said, "Oh, no, my dear; I said I'd done all I could, meaning I *had* done it. It is a great mistake to think that people who speak correctly do so through constant care and watchfulness. They do it without thinking anything about it. Do you have to be careful not to shake your small fist at a stranger in the street?"

"No, indeed!"

"Well, my dear little girl, I could no more say, 'I done it,' through carelessness, than you could do that, or turn in your toes, or look cross-eyed, without thinking of it. It is all a matter of habit."

## CHAPTER XVI.

## A VISIT.

A visit—what is it? Imagine a time  
When all the amenities glow in their prime  
PRAIRIE CHICKEN.

"I saw a very funny notice in a ferry-boat while I was away," said Laura, who had recently come home from a visit. "'Passengers not allowed to get on or off this boat until made fast to the bridge.' I didn't see how they could ever get on board while they were fast to the bridge, nor how they could be made fast to the bridge before they got off the boat, unless there was a very long chain to fasten them with."

"That's equal to the notices in our cars," said Emily. "'Passengers not allowed to get on or off the platform while in motion.' How could they ever get off if they weren't in motion?"

"I think I can match both of those with my dyer's ticket," said Mrs. Vincent. "'No goods delivered without this ticket, nor responsible for any left here

over three months.' Usually it is the tradespeople who are responsible for goods, but by this wording it seems to be the goods themselves."

"What are 'goods'?" asked Ruth.

"'Goods' means various things; sometimes merchandise, or whatever people have to sell, and sometimes it means their possessions of all sorts. Dress-makers use it to express the cloth ladies' gowns are made of; everything, from a sixpenny calico to the richest brocade, goes under the name of 'goods.' But ladies should not speak of their 'goods'; they should say 'material,' or else name the particular kind of cloth they mean—silk, cashmere, muslin, or whatever it may be."

"It's like asking for 'meat' at dinner, isn't it, Mrs. Vincent?"

"That's a very good illustration," said Mrs. Vincent, laughing. "I'm glad you remember so well."

"I expect Ruth is thinking of the time when she asked Uncle Kay for meat, and he asked her if she wouldn't like some food, too," said Ralph.

"Ho! ho! Mr. Ralph! You expect! Expect a thing that is now, when you can't expect any thing but what is coming afterward! Oh, I never!"

"That will do, Ruth," said Mrs. Vincent. "You have crushed Ralph sufficiently. Which of you will take this book to the library and put it away for me?"

"Me! Me!" shouted both children at once, seizing the book and starting for the door.

"Come back!" exclaimed Mrs. Vincent; "come back, both of you! Emily, will you be so kind as to put this book in its place?"

"Oh, Aunt Fanny!" "Oh, Mrs. Vincent!" "What did we do?" (in chorus.)

"Try to remember."

"I know!" said Ruth. "We said 'me'! But I don't see why you couldn't make us say it right and then let us go all the same. It's such fun to see which can get there first!"

"You wouldn't have been so likely to remember another time not to say 'me' when you ought to say 'I.' But to make up for it, you may go to the kitchen and ask Bridget to give you each a doughnut."

"I didn't tell you, Mamma," said Laura, who was now left alone with her mother, "what a struggle I had to get dressed at Mrs. Ashton's. There was no water in the room when I went there, and no soap and no

towels, and I was horribly dusty after my journey; and I didn't know where the girls' rooms were, so I couldn't ask them for anything, and finally, after I'd been wandering about the hall awhile, I found the bath-room door open and went in there and washed my face and hands."

"Mrs. Ashton hasn't altered in the last twenty years," said Mrs. Vincent, much amused. "I visited her twenty years ago, when we were both young ladies, and had the same experience. I remember, too, that I had to ask her for pins to dress myself with the first evening, before my trunk came. There was an elegant pincushion, but not a solitary pin."

"I hadn't even a pincushion," said Laura. "Eunice said she had been meaning to make one for that room for the last two years—it wasn't the grand spare-bedroom, you know—but she never could remember it. So I just laid my pins on the bureau all the while I was there. And she and Stella had beautiful pincushions in their rooms. They have separate rooms, with everything you can imagine. If some one had been visiting me, I should have put my own cushion in her room, and gone without one myself."

"I hope you will always remember that, Laura,"



answered her mother. "That is the one use we can make of things that are open to criticism—not to be guilty of them ourselves. I had another trouble when I was visiting Stella Van Zandt,—Mrs. Ashton she is now. It was at Christmas time, and the weather was bitterly cold, and the heat was kept turned off from my room, so that Mrs. Van Zandt's, which was just under it, could be kept at a temperature of seventy-five degrees all the time."

"How abominable!" exclaimed Laura.

"I thought so then," said her mother. "There was a grate in my room, too, and plenty of servants, but it never occurred to any one to have a fire made there. I was glad when the time came to go away, for the contrast between the library, where we sat most of the time, with a blazing coal fire in addition to the heat from the register, and my freezing bedroom, was too cruel."

"What kind of place did you have to hang up your things in, Mamma?"

"Let me think—it was a large mahogany wardrobe in the room, but it was entirely full of Stella's party dresses, so that I was obliged to hang mine over the backs of chairs."

"The very same!" exclaimed Laura, gleefully. "There was a nice closet opening into my room, perfectly full of Eunice's and Stella's best dresses. They took them down and showed them to me, and then hung them up again. I told them I had taken the liberty to hang two on one hook, so as to get a place for one of mine, and they said it was no matter."

"Well, my dear, the moral of it all is that you must be very careful that no guests can ever say the same of your arrangements."

"I know another thing," said Laura. "When I have company I will never tell them that eight o'clock is the breakfast hour, and then when they have forced themselves to get up out of a dead sleep and hurry through their dressing, so as to be in time, not have breakfast till half-past eight or a quarter of nine!"

"Is that what they did at Mrs. Ashton's?" asked Mrs. Vincent.

"Yes, and they did the same to an old lady who was staying there for a day or two while I was there. When I heard Mrs. Ashton say, with her most beaming smile, 'Eight o'clock is our breakfast hour!' I longed to say, 'No, it isn't!' but I restrained myself. So the next

morning old Mrs. Dupont came down exactly at eight, and sat alone in the library till I came in about twenty minutes past eight, and then we both waited for the others. Mrs. Ashton never made the slightest apology, nor said she was sorry to have kept her waiting, but just laughed and said, 'It's almost impossible to drag one's self out of bed these cold days!' She didn't notice how we had dragged ourselves out of *our* beds!"

"I hope you didn't give Mrs. Ashton any occasion to make remarks about *your* breeding, Laura?"

"I flatter myself that I didn't, Mamma. I don't suppose people are altogether good judges of their own conduct, but I really don't think I threw any discredit on your bringing-up. I didn't sit and read by myself, and I didn't object to any thing they proposed to do for my entertainment, and I did be punctual at meals when I could find out what the hour was, and I didn't show that I thought it a bore to tag round with the girls while they were doing their shopping and I would so much rather have stayed at home, and I certainly didn't scratch matches on the wall and throw the ends on the floor, as your literary friend did. Now, don't you think I'm a model young person?"

... I remember laughing with you one  
time in the Ashing to ask you for a  
time later - I think of you but he won't answer  
of expect to see him.

[illegible]

... he

... aunt.  
... he saw  
... that he had  
... ating shell."  
... in the street

“Why, Laura! how exceedingly ill-bred, when you know that to write to your host is the very first thing to be done after a visit! I am surprised at you. I reminded you of it, too, the same morning. Why did you not attend to it immediately?”

“I can’t give you any reason, Mamma, except that I didn’t do it at the moment, and then it slipped my memory entirely. I’ll go and write the letter this very minute, and mail it before dinner.”



## CHAPTER XVII.

## STREET MANNERS.

Kind hearts are more than coronets.

TENNYSON.

Gaze not on the marks and blemishes of others, and ask not how they came.

GEN. WASHINGTON.

"Oh, I saw the queerest-looking man in the street to-day!" said Ralph one evening at the dinner-table. "His face was all drawn together at one side, so you couldn't hardly tell where his eye was, and he was so awful lame he couldn't hardly hobble."

"I hope you didn't stare at him!" exclaimed Laura.

"Well, I couldn't help looking at him a little, he looked so queer."

"I don't think it is 'well' at all, Ralph," said his aunt.

"I think it was very ill-done, and very cruel, if he saw you do it. Suppose you should find out that he had been a brave soldier, almost killed by a bursting shell!"

"Why, everybody looks at queer people in the street, Aunt Fanny. You can't help it."

"A well-bred person can always help it, Ralph. The more peculiar any one's appearance is, the more careful a kind-hearted person will be not to take the slightest notice of it. You should look away the moment you see any one suffering under such a misfortune, and appear not to observe it."

"I thought your aunt would be down on you for saying he 'couldn't hardly,' and that he was 'awful lame,'" said Marion.

"Two cents for the poor-box!" said Ralph. "'Down on you' is slang; isn't it, Aunt Fanny?"

"I'm afraid it is 'slangy,'" answered his aunt, "but it is not nearly so disagreeable to me as the vulgarisms Marion is speaking of; and they are all so much more pardonable than want of feeling, that they made very little impression on me, compared with that."

"I didn't mean to be unfeeling, Aunt Fanny. I wish you could see some of the other boys when they tease crazy Jim. I always tell them they ought to be ashamed of themselves."

"I'm glad I don't see them, unless I could do something to prevent it. It would make me unhappy for all day. I hope you will always throw your influence on

the side of what is right and kind, Ralph. Nobody knows how much good he can do in that way, even though the effects don't always appear immediately. If you can't persuade boys to do what you know is right, the best way is to keep out of their company."

"I think that of all the ill-behaved creatures I ever saw, those from the B. Street school are the worst," said Laura. "I hate to be in the Avenue when they come out of school. They either walk in rows of three or four abreast and don't turn out for you, or they stand and talk in a bunch and cover the whole sidewalk; and wherever they are, they stop their talking long enough to stare at you as if you were a natural curiosity, and then burst out laughing the minute you get past, and you hear them cha-cha-ing louder than ever."

"I suppose they come mostly from ignorant families," said her mother. "If young people don't see habitual good-breeding at home, you can't expect them to learn it at school unless the teachers have time to make a special point of it. You may not always be able from people's actions in the street to tell what manners prevail at home; but if you see them rude away from home



you may be sure that they are no better bred in their own houses."

"I meet the girls from the A. Street school very often," said Elsie, "and they behave well enough."

"A great many of them are foreigners," said Mrs. Vincent, "and they haven't learned yet that 'one person is as good as another and a little better!' They have still something of the old-fashioned idea that it is becoming for young folks to be modest and deferential."

"There were the most bewitching little creatures living opposite Mrs. Ashton's house when I was there," said Laura. "Everybody called them 'The Brownies.' They had little brown suits, and brown hair and brown eyes, and their name was Brown, so it came in very well. They had the quaintest and prettiest ways I ever saw. The youngest is only five years old, and when I asked her a question she would say, 'Yes, Miss Laura,' or, 'No, Miss Laura,' so cunningly! It sounds so sweetly to hear children say your name when they answer you, instead of 'yes, ma'am,' and 'no, ma'am.'"

"Do things sound 'sweetly,' Laura?" inquired her mother.

"I wish they did! It would come so much more

natural to say it. I suppose they have to sound sweet, though."

"I wish there could be something invented for children to say besides 'ma'am,' and 'sir,'" said Emily. "You can't expect them all to repeat your name every time they speak to you, and it sounds so rough for them just to answer 'yes,' and 'no.'"

"That is entirely a matter of home education," said Mrs. Vincent. "Children who are well trained will find a dozen ways to soften a sentence so as not to appear rough, just as grown people do. One very simple one is to add something to the 'yes,' and 'no,' like, 'yes, I have done it'; 'no, she is not at home now,' and so on. And did you ever notice how disagreeable the word 'what?' is, in an ill-mannered child's mouth? To hear a child call out 'what?' to its mother, perhaps from up or down stairs or from another room, makes me shiver. It is just as easy, if one is willing to take the pains, to teach children to add the name, or at least to say, 'What did you say?' or, 'Did you speak to me?' as to let them indulge in those coarse habits."

"Oh, Laura!" said one of the school-girls, coming

into the room. "Are you home so soon? I thought you were going to be away till Saturday."

"I did expect to have stayed longer when I went," answered Laura, "but Mamma thought I might 'wear out my welcome,' so she said a week was enough."

"How could you expect to 'have stayed,' Laura?"

"Oh, Mamma! you will shorten my days! I expected to stay, and now I am glad to have stayed so long. And you don't say a word to Josephine about saying 'are you home'!"

"I was keeping that in reserve. Josie, how many years do you think you will spend with me before you learn not to say that people are 'home,' or are 'east,' or are or have been some place or thing which no one can be?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Vincent. You know I have only two more to do it in. Do you think there's any chance of me learning in that time?"

Mrs. Vincent clasped her hands in a hopeless way, and Ruth remarked, "That's because you said, '*me* learning.'"

"*My* learning, I meant. Now, Mrs. Vincent, don't you think I shall?"

"I hope so, Josie; my bump of hope is very large. If you could only realize the importance of it, I think you would. The trouble is that it seems of so little consequence to you. If you could see, as those you meet will see, the difference between a careless, slipshod talker, and one who uses pure English, you would—"

"But, Mrs. Vincent, if the right expression don't come to you when you need it, what are you to do?"

"There is one thing you need never do—interrupt another person in the middle of a sentence."

"Oh, I beg your pardon; I didn't think."

"Of what is 'don't,' a contraction?"

"Do not."

"Then can you say 'the right expression do not come'?"

"Doesn't come."

"With practice and attention, the right expression *will* come. Only care enough about it."

"At last!" exclaimed Marion, who came in after seeing a visitor to the door. "I declare my legs actually ache from standing there and talking to Antoinette Chapman. She gets up to go away after she has made a reasonably long visit, and then she stands and stands,

first in the parlor, and then in the hall, and then in the vestibule, and then on the steps, until my whole mind is centered in the thought of how much longer she is going to stay. I believe her visit standing up was equally as long as the one she made sitting down."

"As long, Marion; you don't need any 'equally' there."

"Equally long with the other. Don't you think it is awfully tiresome, Mrs. Vincent?"

"I don't see anything 'awful' about it. I think it is tiresome, certainly, and there are some ladies whom I dread to see rise after they have been making a call, knowing how long I shall have to stand afterwards. It is quite an art to know just how to take leave. Some nervous people are so afraid of being thought tedious that they go off as if they had been shot out of a gun. It is an awkward way, but it is better than the other."

"Antoinette is a real nice girl, though, for all," rejoined Marion. "She never says anything hateful about people, and she doesn't talk everlastingly about her own affairs and not seem to know that you have any."

"You give her very high praise, Marion; but can't you find a better expression than to call her 'real nice'?"

I suppose you have used 'nice' in that way until you have forgotten the true meaning of it. Some one says, 'it is applied to a sermon, to a jam tart, to a young man—in short, to everything.' I think we have reached that point here. And when you say she is 'a real nice girl,' do you mean that she is a real girl and not a doll stuffed with sawdust, or what do you mean?"

"She is a really nice girl, not a pretend-nice one; nice through and through."

"Then your word has more in it than such words generally have; but still, grammatically, you use an adjective for an adverb. You would not say a picture was painted 'good,' would you?"

"Not quite so bad as that, I hope."

"But 'real nice' is just as much a mistake as 'painted good,' and you mustn't let yourself be misled by its being more common."

"Oh, Mamma!" exclaimed Laura, "how you would have suffered if you had had to listen to some of the young ladies who came to visit Miss Theodosia Ashton! Everything was 'swell.' They said their cuffs were swell, and the parties they went to were swell, and the gentlemen who came to see them were swell, and the

soup they had for dinner was swell, and even the poor baby was swell, too. At first I thought it was very funny, but after a while I got dreadfully tired of it."

"It is strange," said Mrs. Vincent, "that well-brought-up girls can think such talk witty or elegant. I think the time is coming when it will not be the fashion to talk slang, and that the people who use it will be classed in a lower grade of society, where it seems naturally to belong. You may be certain of one thing; no one will miss it if you don't use it, so you will be on the safe side if you leave it to 'gents' and 'parties.'"

"Oh, Mamma! I didn't tell you that Emily's sister, Miss Dora Greenwood, was visiting at Mrs. Ashton's while I was there. She is some connection of theirs. She is just too sweet!"

"My dear Laura, do be moderate, and don't say silly things!"

"But, Mamma, she is perfectly lovely. Her manners are charming, and she was so full of spirit and so entertaining that we young ones just loved to sit and listen to her!"

"'Just' again, Laura!"

"Well, if you knew how hard I tried not to say it, you

would give me credit instead of scolding me. But to hear her tell about the time when she was keeping house for her father and having all kinds of dreadful servants was *just* as funny as it could be!"

"Her letters to her mother were delightful," said Mrs. Vincent, ignoring the 'just.' "Mrs. Greenwood read me some of them. Dora was only about a year older than you are, and she not only kept house and looked after a family of little brothers and sisters, but went to school and learned to cook, all at the same time! Her mother could never read over the letters without crying."

"I wish we could have her here in the vacation, Mamma."

"I should be most happy to see her," answered Mrs. Vincent. "We'll ask her. Perhaps she will come a few days before the end of school, and take Emily back with her."



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## AN OLD JOURNAL.

Now will be the right season of forming them to be able writers, when they shall be thus fraught with an universal insight into things.  
MILTON.

"MISS BLANK," said Madeline Armstrong one day at "composition-hour," "you promised to read us a good composition some day—one that wasn't all full of corrections."

"I have one to-day that I think will answer the purpose," said Miss Blank. "There are some slight corrections—very few—but I shall not stop now to point them out, but will give you the benefit of the story, just as it is."

"Oh, is it a story?" exclaimed several voices at once.

"Not exactly; it is written in the form of a diary. The title is, 'A Record found in a Bottle in Hudson Bay, by Capt. J. Coleman, of the Good Ship Dolphin.' The first date is June, 1609, and the last March, 1611. Whose adventures do you suppose it relates?"

"Hendrik Hudson's," was answered after a minute's thinking. Then Miss Blank began to read.\*

"We have just arrived at the mouth of a broad strait. At last my long-cherished plan seems to be on the eve of fulfillment, and I shall be the great benefactor of the earth in commerce and navigation. My son is well, considering his recent illness, and the visions of my future glory, if indeed this is the passage that leads to the Western Ocean, bring back his strength and health more speedily than the most efficient drugs.

June 15, 1609.

Alas! my visions of fame are fading like the warm lights in a summer sunset! The beautiful, deceitful strait is fast growing narrower. But yesterday I sent Hendrik Beck with the long-boat to sound this river, (for, alas, it is only a river!) and he brought back word that the water two miles up is but seven feet deep.

The natives are very kind and hospitable, but I do not trust them in the ships.

The scenery is more beautiful than the mind can imagine.

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\* This is a *bona fide* composition handed in by a girl of fourteen, with no alteration except in regard to a few trifling verbal errors, and some additions in punctuation.

June 30, 1609.

We set sail yesterday to return from an unsuccessful voyage. My sailors are discontented, my son ill, my disappointment weighs on my mind, and yet I have discovered a new land, a new river and a new people. I will have courage, and try again to find the desired passage.

Aug. 15, 1609.

We have crossed the great ocean and are safe at home at length. We were welcomed with much joy, and on showing my map to the governor he promised that I should have another ship and try once more to find a passage through to the Pacific. We have lost less by this voyage than the former navigators, having lost but one man and no ships. Poor Hans Schwartz was washed overboard on the return voyage.

April 10, 1610.

I am at last started on the voyage which I shall never return from until I find what I seek.

My dear son insisted on accompanying me again. The noble boy! His heart is set on my accomplishing this passage, and if there is such a way I'll find it, or not live to hear of another's discovery of it.

May 8, 1610.

We have reached the coast of a barren land and are now sailing north, keeping the shore of this apparently forsaken country in sight.

We see huge mountains of ice and snow sailing in the sea, and some of the sailors are terrified and implore me to turn and go in a more southerly direction.

May 17, 1610.

To-day it was very cold and we passed near several large icebergs.

My son is well, and full of expectation.

May 26, 1610.

We have entered a passage in the sea and can occasionally see land on both sides of us. We are sailing in a northwesterly direction. It is bitterly cold and there are no living creatures to be seen except some walruses. The sea is very rough.

March 19, 1611.

We have been sailing in a boundless sea for many days. The waves are very rough, and large blocks of floating ice endanger our safety. The men are discontented and ask every day to be allowed to return to their homes. I fear a mutiny, yet if I could only im-

part to them half of my intense desire to discover this passage we would sail on until we found it or died.

My son, ever careful for my safety, advises me to comply with the sailors' requests, but I can not turn back now with the thought that perhaps if I had stayed one day longer I might have discovered the way.

March 25, 1611.

At last my end has arrived. This morning at half-past six, three of the crew entered my room, seized and bound me in spite of my resistance and entreaties, and carried me on deck, where I saw my son secured in the same way. The carpenter interfered and tried to help me, but in vain; they took him and bound him also. After some discussion among themselves they unbound us, and to our horror we were informed that we were to be cast away in an open boat in this stormy and cold sea.

March 30, 1611.

I can hardly write, my hand is so numb.

They put the faithful carpenter, my son and myself into an open boat on this awful ocean. My heart has grown hardened; I do not care what becomes of me. I

hardly know what I write. My son died this noon, and now lies cold and stiff in the bottom of the boat.

The carpenter was washed overboard just after the cruel death of my son, and I am left alone adrift in an unknown ocean. My brain seems on fire; I am not cold, though my son died of cold and my hair is hung with icicles.

The waves grow every minute more and more terrible yet I welcome them, for they bring death nearer.

I now consign this record, with little hope of its ever being read, to the sea.

HENDRIK HUDSON."

"Isn't that splendid!" exclaimed several of the girls at once, when Miss Blank had finished reading.

"I don't know that 'splendid' is the right word to apply to it, but it is certainly very good. What is there about it that makes you like it?"

"It sounds so natural," said Elsie.

"So you might say if it had been a description of a sleigh-ride you took last winter."

"It is very picturesque," remarked Bessie Drum.

"What does 'picturesque' mean?"

"Something that would make a good picture."

"That is true; several pictures might be suggested by the description. From the proud, hopeful captain, sailing up the Hudson in sunny weather and expecting every day to find an outlet into the far Pacific, to the poor, desolate father, abandoned in an icy sea, with only the dead body of his son for company, there would be a very pathetic gradation. What is the quality which enables us to portray scenes which we never saw in such a way as to make them seem real?"

"Imagination," said Emily.

"Yes; a well-regulated imagination is an important factor in a composition like this. Another element in the attractiveness of the story is the demand that is made upon your sympathy. You have all read the account of Hendrik Hudson in your history, but it doesn't interest you as this does, because he is not brought before you with such distinctness."

"I think," said Emily, "that one reason why he is more interesting here is because we have nothing else to think of. In the history, you go on studying about so many other things that he is soon driven out of your head. We were all interested in Captain John Smith."

"The more you can make pictures to yourself as you

go along, of every fact that is related in your history, the more pleasure you will take in studying it. The girls often tell me that they recite their lessons from remembering how the words look in the book. That is a wretched way. Try to realize the events you are studying about as if you had seen each one, and you will find it almost as easy to tell about them as if you had really been there !”

“That won’t help you with dates, Miss Blank.”

“No; dates must be learned by a special effort of memory, but when you are in the habit of making this effort it will give you no more trouble than any other. I think the reason why dates are such a bugbear is that people try to learn too many of them. If they would learn only a very few at first, selecting the most important ones, others would group themselves round these. But we are not getting on with our compositions.”

“Won’t you read us another good one ?”

“Before I answer your question, let me ask you one. What is the object of ‘composition-hour’ ?”

“To teach us how to write, I suppose.”

“How to express yourselves in writing. In which way do you think you would learn most—by hearing



the works of the best authors read, or by having your own errors corrected?"

"I don't see why we shouldn't learn most by hearing good authors read. Then we would copy them."

"Why, here you have been reading and studying the best authors for years, and yet I don't see that they have had any effect on you, unless it is from them that you learn to say 'different than' and 'most always.' I think you will find there is no way of learning to write well, except by constant practice—making mistakes, and having them corrected. The ear alone doesn't seem to be sufficient. To prove this, I will give you a sentence written by one of the class of girls who are reading Irving's Sketch-Book: 'But this is something which no traveller has yet accomplished, and probably never will.' I'm sure she didn't find the model for that in Irving. If you finish the sentence, it reads, 'no traveller never will accomplished.'"

"Why, Miss Blank, I don't see that!" exclaimed the writer, Annette Gay. "It means, 'never will accomplish.'"

"But you are not allowed to leave a word to be supplied in such a case except by repeating one that has

been used before. You must not say, 'I have never done it, and never shall,' because that could only be finished by repeating the auxiliary 'done,' so the sentence would stand, 'and never shall done it.'"

"Everybody says it, though, Miss Blank," persisted Annette.

"Most people say it, but even though such terms are permitted in conversation, nothing should be used in writing that will not stand the test of parsing."

"There was another mistake in that sentence," said Annette, "but I've forgotten what it was."

"Let me look at it again. Oh, I see; 'no traveller has accomplished it, and never will.' There you have a double negative. You would not say, 'no traveller never will accomplish.' What would be right?"

"'Nor ever will,'" answered Annette.

"Yes. Now, I will take another sentence. 'She did not take it kindly, being as old, if not older than her adviser.' Can no one correct this? Leave out the parenthetical phrase, 'if not older,' and you will see in a moment; 'being as old than her adviser.'"

"'Being as old as her adviser, if not older,'" suggested Ellen Raynor.

"That would leave it, 'if not older as her adviser,'" said Marion Brooks.

"No," said Miss Blank; "after an adjective in the comparative degree, 'than' may be always understood, without reference to the earlier part of the sentence. 'I said an elder soldier, not a better:'—soldier than you are."

"Does 'than' ever come except before the nominative case?" asked Anna Vail.

"Yes; you can say, 'Why do you give it to her rather than me?' It depends on the case that goes before."

"There's another curious thing about 'than,'" remarked Emily. "It always seems to come after an adjective or adverb in the comparative degree. 'Taller than she.' 'I would rather do it than not.'"

"That is true. You are very observant, Emily. I will give only one more extract to-day. 'We must pass through the furnace of affliction in order to be ripe for the joys of Heaven.' What is the fault here?"

"A mixed metaphor," said Laura. "You don't ripen things in a furnace. They might be cooked there, perhaps."

"Can you give us any other example of a mixed metaphor, Laura?"

"Only that old one that Uncle Kay used to quote," answered Laura. "That's as good as any I know. 'Hark! I smell a rat! I feel it on the coming wind! Let us be prepared, and nip it in the bud!'"

"I think that will be enough for to-day," said Miss Blank, laughing. "After that anything would be an anti-climax."

## CHAPTER XIX.

## SCHOOL MANNERS.

Good breeding is as necessary a quality in conversation, to accomplish all the rest, as grace in motion and dancing.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.

"Oh, dear! I'm so glad school's 'most over!" said Gertrude Oliphant to Miss Darling, toward the end of the term.

"It is natural for you to feel so, Gertrude," answered Miss Darling, "but do you think it is a well-bred thing to say to one of your teachers? It is as much as to say, 'I'm *so* tired of you all, I shall be glad to get away from you.'"

"I'm not tired of the teachers, Miss Darling; it's studying and lessons and coming to school, I'm tired of."

"But it gives the impression that being with us every day is wearisome and disagreeable. You can't separate that from the idea of longing to get rid of lessons. Nobody blames you for being tired, and wanting a vacation; but it is not necessary for you to thrust

the fact in your teachers' faces, as it were, in season and out of season. It makes them feel uncomfortable, and does you no good, but rather the contrary, because it helps to make you impatient."

"Don't you feel tired yourself, Miss Darling?" asked one of the other girls.

"Yes, I'm so tired that I am almost worn out; but how extraordinary you would think it if I went about school saying to the pupils, 'Oh, I'm *so* tired! Don't you wish school were over?'"

The girls laughed at this quotation of Miss Darling's, uttered in a doleful voice and with a *wilted* expression of face and figure. "But then," said one, "it's so different with a grown-up person."

"You mean that a grown-up person acquires more self-control than you have, but there is no reason why you should be rude to me, any more than why I should be rude to you. Common civility requires that we should be bound by the same rules. Besides, there is no need of comparing yourself with a grown-up person. Think how many of your schoolmates there are who would no sooner think of saying such a thing to a teacher than of shutting the door in her face."

"But we can't all be as good as Anita and Amy, Miss Darling."

"I don't know why. Anita and Amy have the same feelings as yourselves, but they have learned to respect other people's. Good manners can be acquired by any one who chooses to take the trouble, and the very first requisite for them is a delicate consideration for the feelings of others. If you have that, you can't go far wrong, and you will avoid, without stopping to think about it, anything that can give pain."

"But don't you think, yourself, Miss Darling, that it would be better to have school close a month earlier, so that we wouldn't have to study in such hot weather?"

"And so give you four months' vacation instead of three? No—I honestly think nothing of the kind. When it came toward the end of school there would be the same groaning and grumbling, and the same wanting to get rid of the last days or weeks. We can't insure the weather at any time. We have sometimes a very warm May and a comparatively cool June; there is no rule about it. You will have now exactly thirteen weeks and two days before school begins again, and yet you want to shorten the short thirty-six or thirty-seven weeks

of school; relieved by the Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter vacations! I am almost ashamed to discuss such a question."

"Mrs. Vincent wants Julia Featherly," said a young girl who came into the room while Miss Darling was speaking, "and she's to come right away." The messenger was one of the recent pupils, and had been but a short time under Mrs. Vincent's care. She did not wait for Miss Darling to finish her sentence, but broke in upon it without hesitation.

"You may be excused, Julia," said Miss Darling. Then, addressing the new-comer, she said:

"It would have been more polite to wait until I had done speaking, Flora. And you should address me personally, when I am in charge of the room, and not deliver your message in that general way. Did Mrs. Vincent say she 'wanted' Julia?"

"No, ma'am; she said I was to come and call her, and that she was to come right straight off."

An approach to a titter was perceptible among the pupils assembled in the library, but Miss Darling checked them by a look.

"I think she must have said 'immediately,' or, 'at



once,' or, 'directly,' or, 'as soon as she can.' 'Right away' is not good English. I will read you something ~~that~~ shows how it sounded to a traveller in our country, who had never heard it at home." And taking down a volume of Dickens's Works, Miss Darling read an extract from his "American Notes."

"'Dinner, if you please,' said I to the waiter.

"'When ?' said the waiter.

"'As quick as possible,' said I.

"'Right away ?' said the waiter.

"After a moment's hesitation I answered 'No,' at hazard.

"'*Not* right away ?' cried the waiter, with an amount of surprise that made me start.

"I looked at him doubtfully, and returned, 'No; I would rather have it in this private room.'

"At this I really thought the waiter must have gone out of his mind, as I believe he would have done but for the intervention of another man, who whispered in his ear, 'Directly.'

"'Well, and that's a fact !' said the waiter, looking helplessly at me: 'Right away.'

"I saw now that 'Right away' and 'Directly' were

one and the same thing, so I reversed my previous answer, and sat down to dinner in ten minutes afterward, and a capital dinner it was."

"Don't any English people know what 'right away' means?" asked Emily, when Miss Darling had finished reading.

"I think they must know it by this time; certainly no one who reads the 'American Notes' can forget it; but it still remains an incorrect expression. Speaking of Americanisms reminds me of what an English clergyman once said to me. 'Your countrymen have such very peculiar ways of expressing themselves! To-day I heard a gentleman speak of 'coming across' a lady in the omnibus. Now I can see what it is to come across a stile or come across a street; but how any one could come across a lady I couldn't understand!'"

"Why, it sounds as natural as can be," said Phemie Drummond.

"It didn't sound natural to him. The same gentleman asked me what we meant by calling little children 'cunning.' He said that he supposed the word to mean crafty, or artful; and it seemed to him utterly inappropriate to apply it to an innocent little child."

At this moment one of the girls came in, heated from walking; and going to the window threw it up to its full extent.

"My dear Lavinia!" cried Miss Darling, "did you forget that there were other people in the room?"

"Oh, it's so *awfully* hot here, Miss Darling! I should think you'd all stifle."

"Who is to be the judge of that—you or I?"

"Well," persisted Lavinia, at the same time shutting the window, "I thought everybody would like some fresh air."

"Then the proper way would have been to ask leave to do it; not to take upon yourself to judge for a room full of people. I know you did not mean any disrespect; but you ought to learn that it is very impertinent for any young person to come into a room where an older one is, and alter either the light or the temperature of the room. Even among companions of your own age, you should first find out whether it would be agreeable to them before you do anything which will affect their comfort. I think it is rather too warm here; you may draw down the window a little from the top, and

the girls who are sitting near it can move if they feel the draught."

"Don't you think we have a right to open the register when we come in and find the room cold, Miss Darling?" asked one of the other girls.

"If a teacher, or any other person to whom you owe respect, is present, you should first ask leave, which will be granted you of course. When there are none but young people in the room you may do it without asking, but then you should close the register again as soon as you feel warm, and leave it as it was before, unless the others prefer the change. I have often come into a schoolroom in the winter and found the girls sitting in a temperature of 75 degrees or more, because some thoughtless girl had opened the register for her own convenience and nobody had remembered to close it."

"Say, Marion," asked Lavinia, who, it is needless to remark, had not been long in school, "have you seen my arithmetic any place?"

"Ask it without saying 'Say!' Lavinia," said Miss Darling. "That is a very bad habit, and unladylike. And don't say 'any place' when you mean 'anywhere.' You can't see a thing a place. You can see it *in* a place;

but what you mean when you say 'any place,' or 'some place,' is 'anywhere,' or 'somewhere.'"

"Isn't it 'most time for the bell to ring?" inquired Lavinia, who thus far had remained in the category of those known among the teachers as "Irrepressibles."

"'*Most* time,' Lavinia? We speak of 'most people,' or 'most schools,' but what kind of time is 'most time'?"

"'*Most* time'? Why, it means pretty nearly time, or just about time. I don't see how else you can say it."

"What would you say, Gertrude?"

"Almost time."

"Oh, I thought you knew better when you talked about school's being 'most over!' You see I was taking notice, though I didn't say anything about it then."

"Trust you for noticing, Miss Darling! I think the things in grammar you don't notice might all stand on the point of the finest cambric needle, and dance there together!"

"In school, I must notice all the English I hear, good, bad and indifferent. 'That's what I'm for,' as Ruthie says, when you tell her she's a good girl. But

out of school, and away from school-girls, I try to notice it as little as I can. It is useless to notice it unless one can correct it, and worse than useless to remark upon it."

"Why worse than useless?"

"Because it would be sure to give offence. There are very few people who can discuss the use of words merely as a matter of general interest. Almost everybody looks at it as a personal matter. I had a lesson on this point when I was not much older than you girls are. I was giving private lessons in mathematics to a friend of about my own age—regular lessons—and though she was very well educated in the main, she made an occasional mistake in her English. In my zeal I was prompted to do her all the good I could, and pointed out some incorrect expressions to her; upon which she turned upon me very promptly with, 'I asked you to teach me arithmetic; I didn't ask you to teach me grammar!' Since then I have been more cautious, but the propensity to improve one's friends, whether they wish it or not, is one very hard to be rooted out from the mind of a born teacher!"

## CHAPTER XX.

## OLD ENEMIES AGAIN.

O'er wayward childhood wouldst thou hold firm rule,  
And sun thee in the light of happy faces,  
Love, Hope and Patience—these must be thy graces,  
And in thine own heart let them first keep school.

COLERIDGE.

"CAN'T I go home, Miss Burney?" asked Lina Barry, one day at recess. "I feel so bad."

"You may go home, if you are not well, Lina," answered Miss Burney, "but I hope you don't feel 'bad'; that is to say, wicked!"

"What shall I say? Badly?"

"Say you don't feel well, or you do feel ill or sick. 'Feel badly' is as incorrect as the other. As to going home, it would be better to ask Mrs. Vincent about it."

"See how carefully Miss Burney avoids saying 'had better'!" said Anna Vail, laughing. "I wish you'd say it sometimes, Miss Burney, just to give us a hold on you!"

Miss Burney taught grammar, and tried to practise

what she taught, though we all know what a hard matter that is in respect to English. "Very good writers say, 'had better,'" said she, "but as there is no verb 'to have better,' I don't see the propriety of it."

"What can anybody say, then," asked one of the new pupils, "if they can't say, 'had better'?"

"'Anybody' is singular, Eveline, so you mustn't say 'they' after it. There are two substitutes for 'had better,'—'might better,' which is the more usual, and 'would better,' which is equally good English, but sounds a little overstrained. Then a good paraphrase is possible, such as 'it would be better' to do so-and-so."

"Perhaps 'would better' is what people mean when they say 'you'd better do' something," suggested Laura.

"Possibly," answered Miss Burney, "but as they generally follow up 'I'd better' with 'hadn't I?' I doubt whether that is the contraction they mean. A little cousin of mine used to improve on this by saying 'bettern't I?' and—'drathern't you?' Oh, what *are* those children doing?" And hurrying away, she opened the door of the "primary" room, from which unusually wild sounds were issuing.

"My dear children! I thought by the sound it was a



bear-garden, and now I see there are no wild animals here, except little girls."

"Oh, Miss Burney," exclaimed Violet Lane, "we really couldn't help it! You'd ought to have seen Lily Gardner. She was making such funny faces."

"'You ought to have seen,' Violet, not 'had ought to have seen.' But you could behave like ladies, even if you were amused; not like rude street boys."

"Why, I didn't know we was acting bad, Miss Burney," said Rose Tree.

"'We was'! Oh, Rose, Rose! After all I have told you about that!"

"Didn't know we *were* acting bad," said poor Rose, who had not the advantage of hearing good English at home.

"You were acting badly—not bad. Don't you think it is ungenerous in all of you to take advantage of Miss Stanton's being out of the room for a moment, to behave improperly? Do you need some one to watch you every minute?"

Several of the little girls hung their heads at this appeal, and Daisy Bush said timidly, "We don't do it only when we forget."

"You *do* it only when you forget. I dare say that is true, but people are often to blame for forgetting. If I had asked you all to go with me to see Forepaugh's Menagerie, would you have forgotten it?"

"No, no, no!" shouted a dozen voices.

"That would be because it was something you were interested in. Now if you cared as much for your teachers' wishes as for your own pleasures you wouldn't disappoint them in this way. How came you to get into such a gale?" Ivy Oakes undertook the explanation.

"Why, you see, Lily Gardner she began to make the funniest faces,—like this—and then, you know, Bud Vineyard she got up on the desk, a-and—"

"That will do," said Miss Burney, as Ivy came to a pause for lack of material. "I think I know enough about it. But when you have spoken a person's name, don't say 'she' after it; 'Lily, she,' and 'Bud, she,'—and don't bring 'you see,' and 'you know,' into all your sentences. I didn't see, and I didn't know, until you told me. Some grown people do this until they become very tiresome. I knew one who seemed as if she could not tell you the simplest thing without adding, 'Don't

you know?' She would say, 'And then, don't you know, I don't like his style of acting. There's something about it, don't you know, that doesn't come quite up to your expectations. And unless a person does that, don't you know, you don't really enjoy it.' And so on to the end of the conversation. Now that is the kind of talker I want you not to be."

"Will I bring those books up stairs for you, Miss Burney?" asked obliging little Myrtle Wood.

"No, thank you, dear; I'm going only as far as the middle room. But I want to tell you something. When we speak of 'bringing' anything, we mean that it should be moved from the place where it is, to the place where we are at the time of speaking. If you went up to my room for a book you would bring it to me here. What is the opposite of that?"

"Take it," said Myrtle.

"Yes; if I wished these books *taken* to my room I would accept your services with pleasure. There's one more thing I should like you to notice. Say '*shall* I take it for you'; not '*will* I?' It would take me too long to try to explain the reason to you now, but you can remember the words. You know whether you *will*

do a thing or not—that is, whether you wish to do it. When you ask whether another person wishes the same thing, the expression is, ‘shall I?’”

“There’s some one asking for you in the reception-room, Miss Burney,” said Olive Greene, “and they seem to be in a great hurry.”

“How can ‘some one’ be ‘they,’ Olive?”

“I don’t know whether it’s a gentleman or a lady. Matilda gave me the message and she didn’t say.”

“You can easily improve on Matilda’s English by saying ‘the person.’ Now, girls, I must leave you alone again, as Miss Stanton is not here; do you think I can do it safely?”

“Oh, yes, Miss Burney, we’ll be jest as good as good,” said one.

“Just,” said Miss Burney; “not ‘jest.’”

“You won’t ketch us doing so again,” exclaimed another.

“Catch—not ‘ketch.’”

“And we’ll go and git into our places now, so as to be ready when the bell rings.”

“Get—not ‘git,’” said Miss Burney, smiling as she disappeared.

"Isn't she funny," said Olive confidentially to Rose, "to care so much about the way we talk?"

"Yes," answered Rose, "and just see this sentence she made me write down in my composition-book. It came out of a lecture or something by the President of Harvard University: 'I recognize but one mental acquisition as the essential part of the education of a lady or a gentleman, namely, an accurate and refined use of the mother tongue.' That's English, you know. 'Greek, Latin, French, German, Mathematics,' and a whole string of hard words, 'are all profitable and delightful' (and then there's something left out and some stars put instead), 'but not one of them has the least claim to be called an acquisition essential to a liberal education, or an essential part of a sound training.' It took me about a half an hour to copy it."

"Miss Burney says you mustn't say 'a half an hour,'" said Olive.

"Well—half an hour then. Here comes Miss Stanton."

When Miss Burney returned to her room a class ranged itself on the bench in front of her. The last seat left was one at the end of the bench farthest from

the door, and Esther Hale, who came forward to take it, passed in front of the class in doing this.

“Wasn’t there room to pass behind the others to get to your place, Esther ?” said the teacher.

“Yes, Miss Burney, but the place was rather narrow.”

“Then you could have gone round my chair, where there is plenty of room. You must try to remember not to pass between people who are sitting near one another when you can possibly avoid it. And there is another thing I want to remind you of. When you are with an older person at the top or foot of the stairs, or going in or out at a door, never push forward in front of that person, but step back and allow her to pass first. You will notice that very little children and dogs always run in before you while you are opening doors. It is natural and quite right for them, but you are all old enough to do what is polite instead of what is natural. Marion, will you move a little farther to the right ? The other girls seem rather crowded.” After a moment, seeing that her request produced no effect, Miss Burney added, somewhat sharply, “Don’t you hear me, Marion ? How can you be so inattentive ?”

"I'm Elsie, if you mean me, Miss Burney. I didn't know you were speaking to me."

"And I did move, all I could," said Marion from the other end of the class.

"I beg your pardon," answered Miss Burney. "I thought I knew you apart. After this, if you will please always to keep the same relative positions you have now, Marion sitting at the right and Elsie at the left, I shall be able to distinguish you, by name at least. Kitty Chapin, I wish you would stop those restless movements of your hands."

"I don't move them any more than I can help," answered Kitty.

"Any more than you can *not* help, you mean, Kitty."

"Why, no, Miss Burney. If I could help it, I would."

"Put the word 'avoid,' which has the same meaning, in the place of 'help,' and you will see. You can't avoid doing a certain thing, so you do it. You can't help doing something, but you won't do it more than you can't help."

"I don't understand it," said Kitty.

"It is very difficult to explain, because the other meaning of the word 'help' confuses you, and 'than'

is a word that leads to many mistakes. Even Milton was deceived by the sound of it, and said 'than whom,' when he ought to have said 'than who.' But as to 'can't help,' until the reason becomes clear to you, remember to say, 'Any more than I can't help' in such cases. I assure you that it is right and the other wrong."

"When did Milton say that, Miss Burney?"

"He said, in speaking of one of the evil spirits,

'Which when Beelzebub perceived, than whom,  
Satan except, none higher sat.'

"Can you tell me why this is incorrect, Elsie?"

"Because 'than' is a conjunction, and can't govern the objective case."

"I know when Lord Byron made a mistake in *his* grammar," said Emily Greenwood. "It is in the address to the ocean where man is dashed on the shore: 'there let him lay.'"

"That was pure laziness," said Miss Burney. "He wanted a rhyme to 'spray,' and it was too much trouble to think of another one or to change the line. But I think he made an unintentional mistake in the beginning of that same canto of *Childe Harold*, when he wrote,



'I stood in Venice on the Bridge of Sighs,  
A palace and a prison on each hand;'

How many palaces and prisons would that be !"

"Two of each," said Elsie.

"Which, of course, he didn't mean. He might have said, 'A palace and a prison on either hand,' by considering 'prison' as one syllable, which it would have borne very well; but he didn't."

"When I'm a great poet," rejoined Emily, "I will write so correctly that nobody can possibly criticise me."

"You'll have hard work to do that," said Miss Burney. "It is very much easier to criticise others than to do the same things well ourselves. But, to go back to our criticism of the poets; so great a change has taken place within the last hundred years in regard to certain rules of English that it is not safe to take even those most remarkable for their correctness as absolute models. Pope says: 'Those move *easiest* who have learned to dance.' What should we say now?"

"Most easily."

"And a few lines further on he makes another mistake, looking at it from our standpoint; 'the words move slow,' instead of 'slowly.' But, in spite of these

errors, nobody since Pope has put so much spirit into as few words as he did. Verse is a kind of fetter on the language used in it; therefore some irregularities are permitted in it which are never allowed in prose writing. Those irregularities are pardoned by what is called 'poetic license.' ”

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## CHAPTER XXI.

## RUTH GOES VISITING.

Custom is most perfect when it beginneth with young years; this we call education. BACON.

"WHICH do you think is the best of these?" asked Emily, holding up to Laura the proofs of two photographs which she had just brought in.

"I think this is the *better* one," said Laura, emphatically, selecting one.

"Why do you call it the *better* one? Why isn't it the *best*?" inquired Emily.

"Because 'best' is only used when there are more than two things compared," said Laura. "When there are two, one is better than the other; when there are three, one is the best of all."

"But suppose there are two just alike?"

"Then the third one is better than the others or the two are better than the third. You can't get out of that. Can she, Mamma?"

"I believe the rule applies universally," replied Mrs.

Vincent, "though it is very much neglected in practice. Now and then even a good writer violates it, but instances like this are becoming rarer all the time. The standard of speech is growing higher as that of manners is falling. I don't remember ever being corrected, when I was a little girl, for saying 'the best of two,' or 'who did you see?' but if I had interrupted my mother when she was speaking, or pulled up a shade when she was in the room without asking her leave, I should have heard of it immediately."

"Which way do you like best, Mrs. Vincent?" inquired Emily.

"I should like a combination of both, if I could get it. I wish to hear our dear mother-tongue spoken with the utmost purity and correctness, and I wish to see our dear daughters models of unobtrusive, ladylike manners, with a delicate sense of propriety that will prevent them from ever making themselves disagreeable to others when it can be avoided. The old-fashioned word 'deference' expresses a quality that is always lovely in young people."

"I don't like to see people stiff and prim," said Laura.

"I think there is no danger of their being so unless

they are self-conscious," answered her mother. "When one is practising what are called 'good manners' for the first time, the effort to do so may make her somewhat prim; but as soon as the manner becomes habitual there is no necessity for her thinking of herself at all, and she will lose any appearance of constraint. What is spontaneous and unconscious will always be simple and natural; therefore not conspicuous."

"I'm ready now, Mrs. Vincent," said Ruth, coming in with her hat on; "you said you wanted to see me before I went to Mrs. Gray's."

Ruth looked like a little rosebud in her best walking-suit; her eyes were sparkling, her cheeks glowing with expectation and her curls dancing about at every movement.

"I wanted to see if you were really ready, my darling," said Mrs. Vincent. "Let me look at you. Yes—that is a clean face; how about hands?"

The little knit gloves were off in a minute and showed a pair of hands not more grimy than might be expected from much experience in sand-houses. The nails, at all events, were clean. "Now let me look inside your mind and see how much is written there about behavior.

First rule; to race about through the house as if there were nobody in it but you and Lily Gray, and plunge into rooms where you are not invited, without even knocking,—”

“Oh, Mrs. Vincent! I never do any such thing!”

“Second rule; to open drawers and boxes and examine their contents, to explore ladies’ work baskets, to pry into closets,—”

“No! no! no!”

“Third rule; to handle everything you see, to finger the velvet chairs and the embroidered table-covers, to pull at fringe, to rub your hands over the gilding on chairs and tables, to stroke anything that looks soft and rich, especially if it is delicate or light-colored;—”

“I won’t! I won’t! I will *not*!”

“Fourth rule; to ask Mrs. Gray a hundred questions about things that don’t concern you at all, to interrupt her when she is talking to some one else, to pay no attention when she speaks to you,—”

“Oh, Mrs. Vincent! I *never* do so!”

“Fifth rule; to decline bread and potatoes at dinner, to say you don’t want any soup, to ask for several help-

ings of some delicacy and make your whole dinner of two or three things that you happen to like,—”

“Now, Aunty!”

“Sixth rule; when you are told that Sarah has come to bring you home, to go on with your play just as if you hadn’t heard a word about it, and wait until Mrs. Gray reminds you of it,—”

“If I do one of those things that you say, I’ll never ask you to let me go anywhere again! You may ask Mrs. Gray!”

“Very well, then; you may be off. Oh, where’s my kiss? Think how hungry I shall be for you before you come back!”

“Any one hearing your list would form a bad opinion of little girls in general, Mrs. Vincent,” said Emily.

“There is not one thing I have named which is not habitually done by the children who come to visit Ruth. No one does them all, perhaps, because no one is here long enough, but there are some children, each of whom, I am confident, would commit every one of those improprieties if she were in the house for twelve hours.”

“Mildred Bryce makes me the most nervous,” said Laura. “I dread to see her come into the room; she

*paws* so. It seems as if she can not be happy unless she is all the while trying the feeling of something. If any article is particularly pretty, that is the thing she will rub her hands over until I am ready to fly at her!"

"And yet," said Mrs. Vincent, "in most respects she is a very agreeable child. She has a very sweet temper and obeys immediately when she is told not to do these things; but she will walk on two or three steps and go through exactly the same performance with the next thing that happens to strike her fancy."

"How pretty your work is, Julia!" said Emily, looking at a purse Julia was making. "I wish I knew how to crochet that stitch."

"Oh, I'll learn you how to do it," answered Julia. "It's very easy when you once know it."

"My dear Julia!" exclaimed Mrs. Vincent in dismay. "I thought you had entirely got over saying 'I'll learn you.'"

"I thought so, too, Mrs. Vincent. I don't do it only when I forget."

"You *do* it only when you forget, you mean. 'Don't' has no business there. Or, you don't do it *except* when you forget."



"Have you some silk you could begin on, Emily?" said Julia. "If you have, I could show you about the purse to-night."

"I don't know but what I have," answered Emily. "I'll go and look."

"You don't need that 'what,' Emily," said Mrs. Vincent. "You may say, 'I don't know but I have,' or 'I don't know but that I have'; never 'but what.'"

In due time Ruth returned from her visit, of which she proceeded to give an animated description. The dinner seemed to have impressed her particularly. "We all set down round the table," she began.

"Sat down, Ruth, not 'set.'"

"Yes, we sat down, and the soup was on the table a'ready, and what do you think it was in? Little bowls,—"

"That was *bowillon*," said Laura.

"And then Mr. Gray he said grace,—"

"Not 'Mr. Gray, *he*,' Ruth!"

"And they ate the bullion with teaspoons, and I had forgot to put up my napkin,—"

"Forgotten, not 'forgot.'"

"And Mrs. Gray says,—"

"She '*said*'; not '*says*.'"

"And she said, *softly*, 'If I was you, Ruthie, I would tuck my napkin into the *neck* of my dress as Lily does. That will keep the front clean.'"

"Did she say 'If I *was* you'?" asked Laura. "Didn't she say, 'If I *were* you'?"

"Oh, I s'pose so; she said whatever was right, anyway. And for dessert they had the queerest kind of fruit,—I don't remember its name,—and Mr. Gray asked me if I'd ever ate any of it before,—"

"Ever eaten any, Ruth; we don't say 'had ate.'"

"And I told him no, and then I was *so* afraid he would ask me if I liked it, for it wasn't overly good,—"

"Not very good, you mean."

"But luckily he didn't. And then, last of all, the waiter brought me a cup of coffee!"

"Did you drink it?" asked Laura.

"No, of course not! But he seemed to think I was a lady. He didn't give Lily any. And then there wasn't only one gas-light,—"

"*Was* only one gas-light, Ruth."

"And that was way up high, most to the ceiling,—"

"Away up high, *almost* at the ceiling."

"And then on the mantelpiece there was two big candlesticks, with a whole lot of candles in 'em—"

" 'There were;' not 'there was.' "

"And when you came to find out, they were just gas-lights in the shape of candles, and the flame came out at the top!"

"Pshaw!" said Ralph, contemptuously; "I've seen those, dozens of times!"

"Do you think that is polite, Ralph?" inquired his aunt.

"Why, I have, Aunt Fanny."

"That is not answering my question."

"You say we ought to speak the truth."

"I asked you a question; you shouldn't go on saying other things until you have answered it."

"Well, I don't suppose it was exactly polite; but oughtn't we to say what we think?"

"Not all we think. The only invariable rule is not to say anything we don't think."

"I don't see how we're to know what we mustn't say."

"We mustn't say, without necessity, anything that may hurt other people's feelings, and especially we

should avoid trying to show that we are superior to them in any way. If we are so, our friends will be sure to find it out. Now it's time for both you and Ruth to go to bed."

## CHAPTER XXII.

## CRITICISM.

Once more, speak clearly, if you speak at all;  
Carve every word before you let it fall.

Do put your accents in the proper spot.

O. W. HOLMES.

Think before you speak. Pronounce not imperfectly, nor bring out  
your words too hastily, but orderly and distinctly.

GEN. WASHINGTON.

"I HAVE written out a list of words which I have heard during the last week," said Miss Burney one day to her class, "just as they sounded to me. I have spelt them as well as I could by the sound, but they look very strange. I never saw any words exactly like them. This is the list: 'Sumpn, pudn, acrost, libry, Febuary, yestday, Satday, Mizoura, Cincinnata, perzist, verzion, nauzea, ketch, git, oaringe, foarest, *afterwords*, kerry, puple, untle, dawl, colume, ast, chickn, corteous, dooty, voyge, kep, swep, wite, yella, w'at, wuz, pilla, extry, histry, toob, doop, Wawshington, hunderd, covetions, tremenjious, stan, crule, highth, sech, awv, instid, mod-

dle, mortle, reggler, quarrl, srewd, nooze, pleg, aig, coard, becuz, jogrfy, po'try, and literatoor.' Besides all these there is one word spelt entirely, so far as I can make out, with the letter 'n.' "

"I can recognize the others," said Laura, "but I don't seem to know 'n.' "

"You will when you hear how it is used. 'Men 'n women; girls 'n boys; bread 'n butter; night 'n day'; and so on. Now I will read my list again, and you will please pronounce the words correctly, each one taking one in turn, beginning with Mary."

When this had been done, Laura remarked, "You have left out one mispronounced word, Miss Burney, which makes Mamma more wretched than anything else; that is rōot."

"It is strange that I should forget that old enemy," answered Miss Burney. "I suppose it is because our united efforts have nearly banished it from the school-room. It is one of the most disagreeable of all mistakes in pronunciation."

"I don't see why you shouldn't say 'rōot' as well as 'foot,' said Geraldine Ashe.

"Because the rules of the English language don't al-

low it," answered Miss Burney. "'Foot' is the only one ending in *t*, I believe, which keeps that pronunciation now without question. 'Soot' is still in dispute, though I rhyme it with 'foot.'"

"And not with 'shoot,'" said Laura.

"No, nor with 'boot.' The words ending in 'k,' like 'book, took, rook,' all have the short sound; but the others must be learned, each one by itself. Some of the lists are almost as hard as the words in *ough*. We have 'good,' and 'flood,' and 'food'; 'wool' and 'fool'; but words ending in 'm,' 'n' and 'f' have invariably the long sound; 'room' and 'soon' and 'roof'; not 'röom' and 'söon' and 'röof.' Some of you remember what Oliver Wendell Holmes says:

" 'Learning \* \* \*

\* Knits her brows and stamps her angry foot,  
To hear a teacher call a root a rööot.'

"I don't wonder that the old lady was angry. Now I have another list of words ready which some of you are in the habit of accenting on the wrong syllable. I will give them as they sound when improperly accented, and you can correct each one as I read it."

" 'Ro' mance, re' source, i' dea, mu' seum, interest' ing,

exquis'ite, hospit'able, peremp'tory, lament'able, mischief'ous, combat'ted, fi'nances, re'cess.'

"Of course these are but a small proportion of the wrongly-accented words in common use, but they are those I hear most frequently. There is another that offends my ear very much, though I believe it has some authority: that is 'sudgest.' It sounds slipshod."

"How else could you pronounce it, Miss Burney?"

"With the first 'g' hard and the second soft: 'sug-jest.' My next list is one of sentences taken at random from compositions and letters. 'To be contented is a very different thing than being unenterprising.'"

"'From being unenterprising.'"

"'I wondered was she the same person I had seen before.'"

"If she was the same person."

"Ought not that to be 'if she *were* the same person,' Miss Burney?"

"What do you think, Gertrude?"

"I think 'was' is right, because it relates to a matter of fact."

"How could you alter the sentence so as to introduce 'were'?"

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"I said to myself, 'If she were the same person she would recognize me.'"

"'I wanted to have gone there yesterday, but I couldn't manage it.'"

"'Wanted to go.'"

"'I arrived home safely.'"

"'Arrived *at* home.' " "'Reached home.'"

"Why is 'reached' correct when 'arrived' is not?"

"Because 'reached' is a transitive verb and 'home' is its object, and 'arrived' is intransitive."

"Is that the only mistake?"

No one answered. "What was it that was safely—your arriving or yourself?"

"Yourself."

"Then you must say 'safe.' An adverb can modify only a verb, and it is not the manner of your arrival that you wish to describe, but your own condition. You journeyed *safely*, but you arrived *safe*. Amelia, what would you think of me if I sat in this manner?" And Miss Burney leaned her elbows on the table before her, in the same awkward manner in which Amelia was leaning on her desk. The latter straightened herself up, and Miss Burney went on to say, "There is no more

propriety in your indulging yourselves in sprawling attitudes because they are comfortable than there would be in my doing so. Rules of common politeness apply equally to us all. Now for another extract. 'She was stopping in town for a few days at her aunt's.' "

" 'Staying in town.' "

" Why? "

" Because 'stopping' means ceasing to do something, —not continuing."

" 'The arrangement was neither for her benefit or ours.' "

" 'Nor ours.' "

" 'I must now bring this lengthy letter to a close.' "

" Leave out 'lengthy.' "

" Why? "

" Because you oughtn't to describe your own letter."

" And even if you wanted to describe anything else, 'long' is always a better word than 'lengthy.' 'Lengthy' is a dictionary word, but it is a very ugly one, and entirely unnecessary. 'An apple or a piece of bread were all we could get to eat.' "

" 'Was the only thing we could get to eat.' "

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“ ‘If I can’t do my own work, I certainly won’t undertake any body else’s.’ ”

“ ‘Any body’s else.’ ”

“ Why ? ”

“ Because ‘else’ is an adjective, and can not be put in the possessive case.”

“ Yes, or if you prefer it you may say, ‘any other person’s.’ ”

“ ‘If I had of known it I should have gone sooner.’ ”

“ ‘Had known it.’ ”

“ What word must be omitted ? ”

“ ‘Have.’ ”

“ How do you suppose it is spelt ? ”

“ H-a-v-e, I suppose.”

“ No, it is spelt o-f. It seems too absurd to criticise, but it occurs in the composition of a girl of sixteen who belongs to one of the most highly cultivated families in this country. Now take this sentence: ‘Whether advisable or no, Francis I. was bent upon going to war.’ What is the fault there ? ” No one answered. “ Supply something after ‘no’; wouldn’t the sentence stand, ‘advisable or no advisable’ ? ” The girls quickly perceived that the adverb should be “not.”

"This construction is very common," said Miss Darling, "but I think it better to avoid it. 'Whether or no,' has been accepted as a sort of idiom. The dictionaries give it and quote Lord Bacon as authority, but it can not be parsed, and any peculiar use of 'no,'—such as, for instance, to qualify a verb, expressed or understood,—is inadvisable. The next expression I have marked is, 'but she was so much taller than me that she reached it easily.'"

"'Taller than I.'"

"Why?"

"Because if you finished the sentence it should read 'taller than I am.'"

"To be sure, this was only a suppositious circumstance, but it might have happened just as it was related."

"I can't see any mistake there," said Elsie, as Miss Darling paused for a correction.

"Look out the word 'suppositious' in the dictionary."

"Why, here it is," said Elsie. "S-u-p-p-o-s-i-t,—oh, I see! It's supposititious."

"There is no such word as 'suppositious'; 'supposititious' is the word meant," answered her teacher,

"though I have known many people older than the writer of this who made the same mistake. Here is one young lady who spells the word 'learned' as many people pronounce it—'learnd.' Esther, can you tell me the distinction?"

"When 'learned' is used as a participle, it is pronounced as one syllable; when it is an adjective, with two."

"Give an example of each, Henrietta."

"'I learned my lesson before school. Dr. Johnson was a very learn-ed man.'"

"'Nothing seemed to have transpired since we left.'"

"'Since we left home,' or whatever the place was."

"Is that all?"

"Nothing had occurred."

"Why ought the word to be changed?"

"Because 'transpire' means 'to become known,' and the writer meant that nothing had happened."

"'Papa won't let us eat veal, because he says it isn't healthy.'"

As no one offered any remark, Miss Darling said, "'Healthy' should be 'wholesome,' or 'healthful.' An animal may be perfectly healthy while it is alive and yet its meat may not be wholesome for human

beings. Never speak of food as being 'healthy.' The next instance of incorrect language is, 'People like you and he can't be expected to do that.'"

" 'Like you and him.' "

" Why? "

" Because you couldn't say 'like he.' "

" That is a proof, but it is not a reason. "

" Because after the word 'like,' the word 'to' is always understood, and 'to' is a preposition governing the objective case. "

" Very well; now our hour is up, and I must keep the rest of my list for another time. "

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## CONTRADICTING, AND OTHER MATTERS.

She saith not once *nay* when thou sayest *yea*. CHAUCER.

"I do wish, Ralph," said Laura, one morning, very impatiently, "that you wouldn't take away my pen. You do it almost every day."

"I don't," retorted Ralph. "I haven't touched your pen this morning."

"Yes, you did; I saw you take it off this table myself."

"I did not!" answered Ralph; and it is impossible to say how much longer the dialogue might have continued in the same strain, if Mrs. Vincent, who was present, had not interposed.

"Laura! Ralph! What are you thinking about to stand there contradicting each other like a pair of street vagabonds? Don't you know that that is contrary to good manners, as well as very disrespectful to me?"

Both began to repeat their assertions, but were stopped short by Mrs. Vincent.

"That is not the point I am speaking of. I want you to notice the excessive rudeness of your conduct. The *fact* is of small importance in comparison. No doubt you both believe what you say, and it is not worth while to go into the merits of the case. I will give you each a new pen if you need one; but I want you to understand what a shocking thing a flat contradiction is. Instead of 'you did,' and 'you didn't,' why not say, 'I think you did,' 'I think you must have mistaken'?"

"Why, when you know you're right, Mamma," said Laura, "what's the use of pretending that you only think you are?"

"And I knew she was wrong," said Ralph, positively.

"That has nothing to do with it in either case. It is a matter of good breeding. Among well-bred persons the form of stating your opinion is just as much a matter of training as the way of eating. You don't drink soup from your plate, and you don't sit down to table with your hat on; not because there is anything wrong in these actions, but because it is not the custom in good society. Neither is it the custom to contradict flatly what another person says. You can always soften what you have to say by some courteous addition."



"I'd like to know how," said Laura.

"Suppose Mrs. Arnot should say to me, 'I saw you at the concert last night,' do you think I should answer, 'No, you didn't; for I wasn't there!'"

The children could not help laughing at this, though they were still somewhat inflamed, but the reply struck them as exceedingly ludicrous when attributed to Mrs. Vincent.

"That's very different, Aunt Fanny," said Ralph. "She wouldn't be accusing you of doing anything wrong."

"Then I'll suppose another case. What if our neighbor, Mr. King, should say to me, 'Your nephew broke two of my windows yesterday, throwing stones at them,' and I knew it was impossible, do you think you hear me saying, 'No, he didn't!'"

"Everything sounds different when grown people say it," answered Ralph.

"That is according to the standard you adopt. It is just as shocking to me to hear two children contradict one another as it would be to you to hear me contradict a gentleman or a lady. A habit of respect to others

is even more important for children, because they haven't judgment to know how far to go."

"Emily is a model in that," said Laura, who had by this time recovered her good humor. "If you notice, she *never* contradicts. If I were to tell her she'd struck her grandmother, I believe she'd say, 'Why, did I! I didn't know it!'"

Emily came into the room soon afterward and Laura immediately attacked her, saying, in a petulant tone, "Emily, I really wish you would tell me when you take my thimble, and not leave me to hunt for it by the hour together."

"Why, Laura!" answered Emily, whose work-box was always in perfect order, and who never had occasion to borrow of anybody, "I didn't know I ever touched your thimble! What makes you think I took it? I think it must have been some one else."

At this there was a general laugh, and the matter was explained in a way which brought a bright blush to Emily's cheek.

"That was hardly fair, Laura," said Mrs. Vincent. "It belongs to the class of practical jokes, and you

know those are contrary to all the canons of good-breeding."

"Why, do you *shoot* out your good-breeding at people?" inquired Ruth.

"This kind of 'canon' is spelt with one 'n' in the middle, Ruthie, and means 'a rule.'" Then turning to Laura, Mrs. Vincent added, "Practical joking is never in good taste. Even if one wants to be complimentary, as you did just now, there are more delicate ways of being so."

"It wasn't as bad as the joke we played on Miss Blank, three or four years ago," rejoined Laura. "That was when we were younger, you know. Jenny Kane got behind the door, and the rest of us began to talk about her, and drew Miss Blank into it, all in the most natural way possible, and she had delivered a detailed opinion on Jenny's character before J. came out and showed herself."

"I'm sorry to hear that you were ever under-bred enough to play such a trick, Laura. You mustn't pass it off on the score of youth. I'm sure even my little Ruth would have too much good taste to join in any such play."

"I will, now you've told me, anyway, Mrs. Vincent," said Ruth. "What did Miss Blank say, Laura?"

"She didn't say much, but what she did say was to the purpose. We never tried it again."

"Now, Mrs. Vincent," said Marion, reverting to the subject of contradicting, "when a person says what you absolutely know isn't so, it seems like a kind of untruth to let it go as if he might be right, and you wrong, after all."

"Oh, that isn't necessary. One can be perfectly courteous, and yet perfectly truthful. If you once make up your mind that a flat contradiction is out of the question, you will find a hundred ways of letting people know what you think, without sacrificing truth in the smallest degree. Try it, and see!"

"I had a hard time one day at Mrs. Ashton's," remarked Laura. "We girls were talking about what we were going to do when we went abroad, and I said I wanted most to see the Vatican, and especially the Sistine Chapel; and one of the young ladies, Miss Ashton's friend, said in the most contemptuous and utterly crushing way, 'The Sistine Chapel is not in the Vatican.' I never felt so snubbed in my life."

"And did you tell her 'you thought she must be mistaken'?" asked Elsie, mimicking a manner of the utmost mildness and submission.

"No, I didn't say a word. I was too entirely put down, and considering that she'd been abroad herself, I supposed I must be wrong. But afterward I looked it up in the descriptions and showed it to Stella and Eunice, so I had the satisfaction of letting *them* see I wasn't such an ignoramus, anyway."

"All those things come from lack of consideration for others," observed Mrs. Vincent. "If that young lady had been in the habit of respecting other peoples' feelings, she would never have exposed her own ignorance in that way. The more we can forget ourselves, and give to other people, and the things that interest them, the place of honor in our conversation, the more agreeable we shall be."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## VACATION.

Labor with what zeal we will,  
Something still remains undone.

LONGFELLOW.

Farewell! a word that must be, and hath been;  
A word that makes us linger—yet, farewell!

BYRON.

EVERYTHING has an end, it is said, and the school year of 18—, at Mrs. Vincent's, proved no exception. The last essays had been read, the last pieces declaimed, the last flowers had been given with smiles and received with blushes, the last carriage had rolled away. Everybody had congratulated everybody else, and the survivors—I mean Mrs. Vincent's family—were again gathered around the table, to recruit exhausted nature with a substantial lunch before the travellers should set forth on their various journeys

The company was the same that we met on our first evening, with the addition of our old friend Dora Greenwood, Emily's sister, who had been at the school for a

few days on a visit. Her bright smile and graceful manner had won all hearts, and she expressed great pleasure at the improvement she saw in Emily.

"Milly couldn't be called really vicious, even when she was at home, Mrs. Vincent," said Dora, "but she used to murder the English language in a way that made my blood run cold. The school we have there is excellent for everything but common talk. They have book-grammar enough to furnish a university, but there's the end of it. The teachers never seem to think there's any connection between that and their conversation."

"How funny it seems to hear Emily called 'Milly'!" remarked Ruth in an "aside" to Mrs. Vincent.

"Ah, I keep forgetting," said Dora, who heard the remark. "We have adopted the fashionable dislike of nicknames at home, and now we're trying to reform. Emily is the only one who is called out of her name."

"I had the dislike long before it became fashionable," said Mrs. Vincent. "I have always discouraged the use of nicknames in my school as far as I possibly could. Kittie and Margie and Susie are trying enough; but when it comes to Daisy and Birdie and Pet and Blos-

som, I rebel. One child was entered at school under the name of Tutu, and when I insisted on something more Christian, her mother said, 'Well, you can call her Tiny, if you like. That's all the name she has'!"

"Between you and I, Mrs. Vincent," said Ruth, in the judicious undertone she generally used at table, "I think the nicknames are prettier than the real names."

"You perceive, Miss Greenwood," said Laura, from the other end of the table, "that education in the Institute is not quite finished, yet. Witness 'between I.'"

"What ought it to be, Ruth?" asked Mrs. Vincent.

"'Between you and me,' I suppose. I wonder what kind of grammar I should speak if it wasn't for you!"

"If it weren't for you, you mean."

"Ruth, I believe you're a fraud," remarked Marion.

"You're not half as good as you pretend to be."

"My dear Marion," said Mrs. Vincent, "the slang-bank is still open. Before you go home, let me ask you not to use that expression."

"'A fraud,' Mrs. Vincent? Why, I didn't know that was slang."

"If you think a moment you will see how inelegant



and inappropriate it is. A fraud is the cheat or deception practised; not the person doing it."

"Quantities of people say it," asserted Ralph.

"We don't measure people by the quantity, Ralph," answered his aunt. "Persons, and other separate objects, are measured by numbers."

"Do you ride much at home, Miss Greenwood?" asked Laura, in the course of conversation.

"No, I have no horse now. Papa promises me one, 'some time or other, when he can afford it,'—but the time doesn't seem to have come yet."

"You see, Laura," said her mother, "Miss Dora takes the word 'ride' in its strict sense, meaning 'on horse-back.' I suppose you meant to ask if she drove about the country in a carriage."

"That 's what I did mean," said Laura. "When you go in a carriage, it isn't you who drive; it's the coachman."

"But you take a drive," answered Mrs. Vincent, "and you'll find that one of the dictionary meanings for 'drive' is, 'to go in a carriage.'"

"So is 'ride' as far as that goes, Mamma. I looked it out the other day."

"It is a mere matter of fashion. Among people who wish to be scrupulous in the use of language, it is usual to make a distinction, but, as it is a non-essential, you may take your choice."

"Aunt Fanny," exclaimed Ralph, who had been exchanging private signals with Ruth, across the table, "is it impolite to lay your knife and fork crossways when you've done with them?"

"The neater way is to lay them side by side," answered Mrs. Vincent, "but you should say 'crosswise,' not 'crossways.'"

"And 'lengthwise,' and 'sidewise,'" chimed in Ruth, who had only lately acquired this knowledge, and wanted to use it.

"Oh, how grand we are!" exclaimed Ralph, contemptuously. "Going to set up for a teacher? Aunt Fanny can dismiss one of the old ones, if you'd be so kind as to take the place."

"Hush, Ralph," interposed Mrs. Vincent. "Don't be rude, and never make disagreeable remarks at table, whatever you do elsewhere. I shall be delighted to engage Ruth as a teacher as soon as she is fitted for one."

"You must take me first, Mrs. Vincent," said Dora.

"Papa says I may come and teach for you next year, if you'll have me."

"Does he really?" inquired Mrs. Vincent. "I didn't suppose your mother could spare you."

"Oh, yes; she's quite strong now, and I've never been away from home except for a few days' visit. Papa thinks it would be good for me to depend on myself for a while."

"I shall think it over, and make a place for you, if I can," answered Mrs. Vincent. "I'm glad you spoke in time."

"I suppose you have not less than fifty applications from teachers in the course of a year, don't you, Mrs. Vincent?" inquired Elsie.

"Not *fewer* than fifty, you mean. Oh, no; I don't have as many as that."

"Now, Elsie'll go home, and say she never could eat a meal in peace on account of being nagged about her English," said Laura.

"No, I won't," answered Elsie. "I'm not that kind."

Mrs. Vincent did not wish to embarrass her visitor by continual corrections in her presence, but she took an opportunity afterwards to warn Elsie that to say,

"I'm not that kind," is an ~~in~~excusable vulgarity, and to tell Laura that her remark was both impolite to the company in general, and disrespectful to her mother in particular.

"There's one thing I've improved in, this year, isn't there, Aunty?" inquired Ruth, who had adopted Mrs. Vincent as a relative. "I don't say 'it's me,' any more, do I?"

"I don't believe you do," returned her friend; "and Ralph doesn't say 'lay,' for 'lie,' more than twice a week."

"And I don't call Germans 'Dutchmen,' any more," added Ralph, with pardonable pride.

"And I've nearly got over saying I 'expect,' when I mean something that is already past," said Elsie, "and that one thing is 'equally as good' as another. What's your credit, Julia?"

"Oh, I've learned so many things since I came here, I couldn't begin to tell them all! But I shall remember them when I go home, Mrs. Vincent," she added, looking gratefully at her teacher.

There was indeed a marked difference between the Julia of the last day of school and the Julia of the first.

The awkwardly-bent head was held erect, the round shoulders were as straight as long ill-habit would allow them to be, and the dangling curls, gathered in with a ribbon behind, no longer tempted the restless fingers, which had learned that most difficult art of keeping still. Elsie and Marion had not succeeded so well in this particular, but required to be frequently reminded that one of the essential points of a ladylike manner consists in the ability to let the hands lie idle when there is nothing for them to do.

"I don't think I look at my hands quite as much as I did. Do you, Mrs. Vincent?" asked Marion.

"Not quite, perhaps," answered Mrs. Vincent, "but I think, if I remember rightly, that I spoke to you about it only this morning, when we were sitting in the library."

"Wasn't it Elsie you spoke to, Mrs. Vincent? I haven't been in the library this morning."

"Now, don't tell me that I can't tell you two apart, after nine months' study!" exclaimed Mrs. Vincent. "It seems as if I *couldn't* have mistaken you again!"

Elsie began to laugh, and Marion confessed that she had been the culprit, but added that it was in the parlor,

and not in the library, that Mrs. Vincent had spoken to her.

"Why didn't you speak out, Elsie, and say it wasn't you? I would," said Laura.

"Marion touched my foot under the table," answered Elsie. "I thought it would be a pity to spoil her little joke."

"Well," said Mrs. Vincent, "I might have made the mistake, at any rate. And how can I expect you young folks to remember all you learn, if I make such failures myself?"

"Yes, indeed," said Marion, "and I'm sure some of the distinctions you have tried to teach us are quite as — *inscrutable* — as the difference between Elsie and me."

"True enough, my dear; so let us all bear with each other's blunders, casting no blame unless it be for willful or heedless persistence in what is wrong."

"There's the expressman," exclaimed Ralph, at the sound of a peal from the door-bell.

"That's a sign that we mustn't sit here chatting any longer," said Mrs. Vincent. "You must all get quite

ready to start, and then we shall not be in a hurry at the last moment."

We can not follow the little party to their several homes, but must hope that some reforms in "speech and manners" have been effected during their stay at Mrs. Vincent's. Perhaps we shall meet them again when they re-assemble, and follow their onward course in the pursuit of some more ambitious branch of study.

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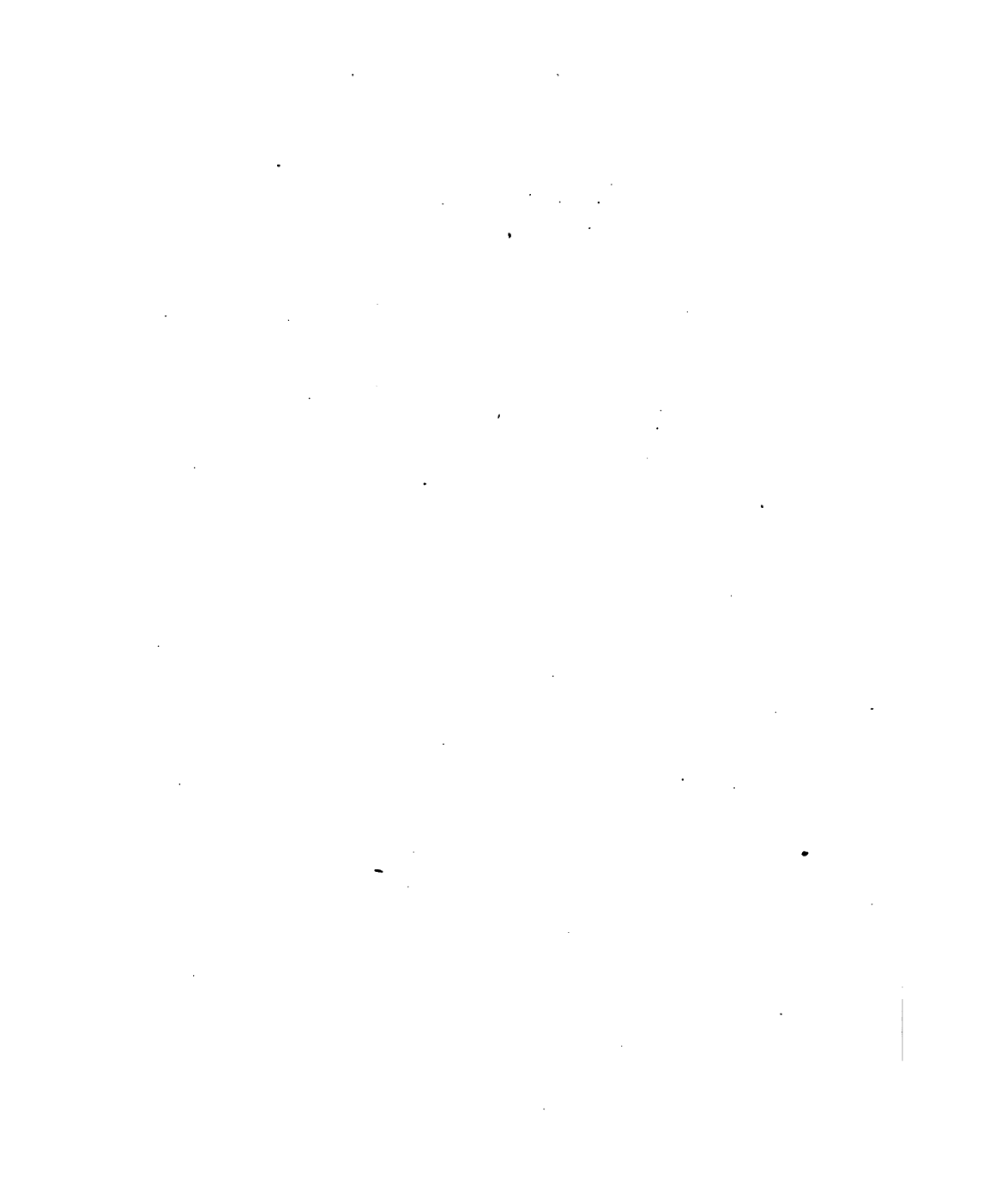
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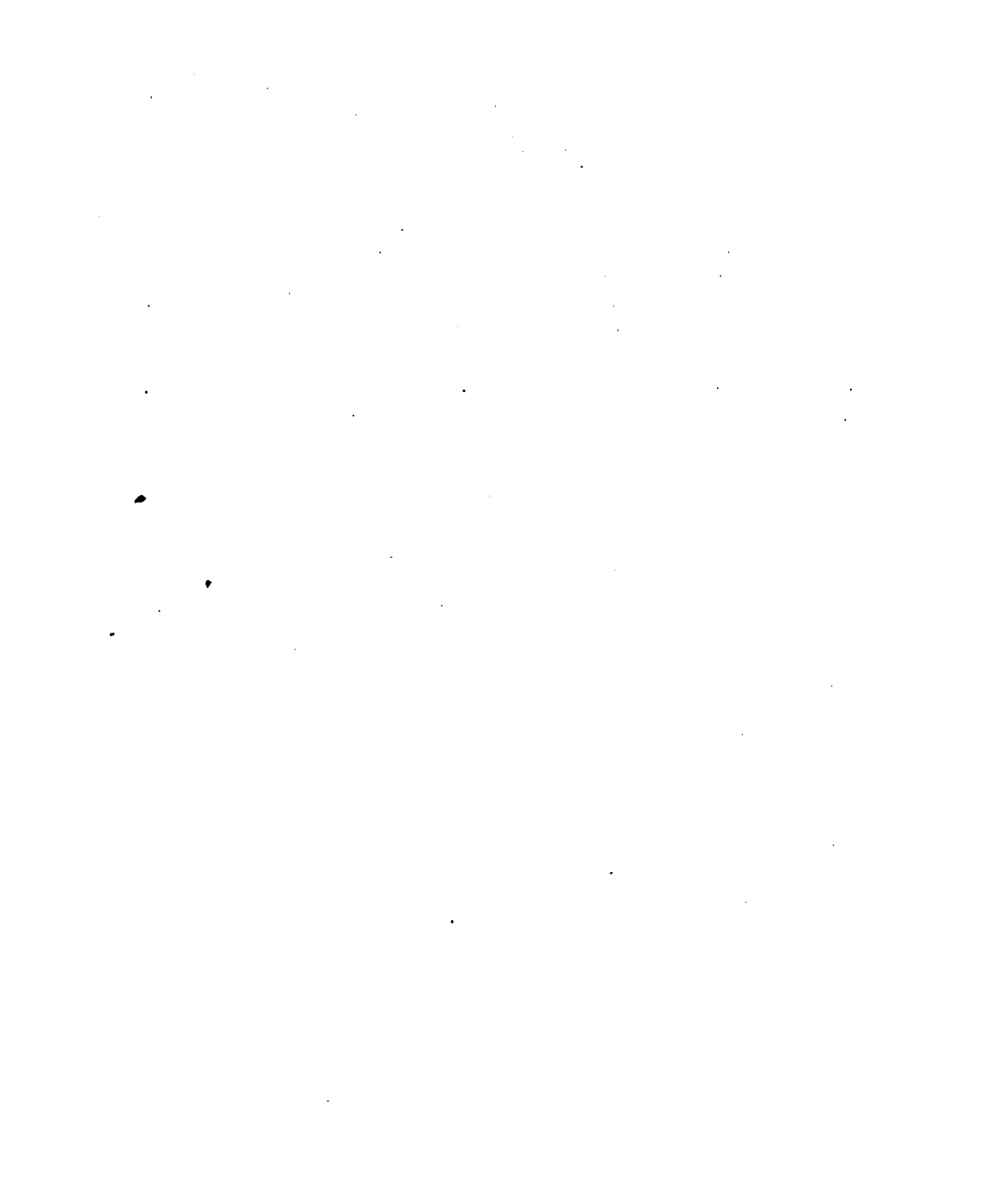
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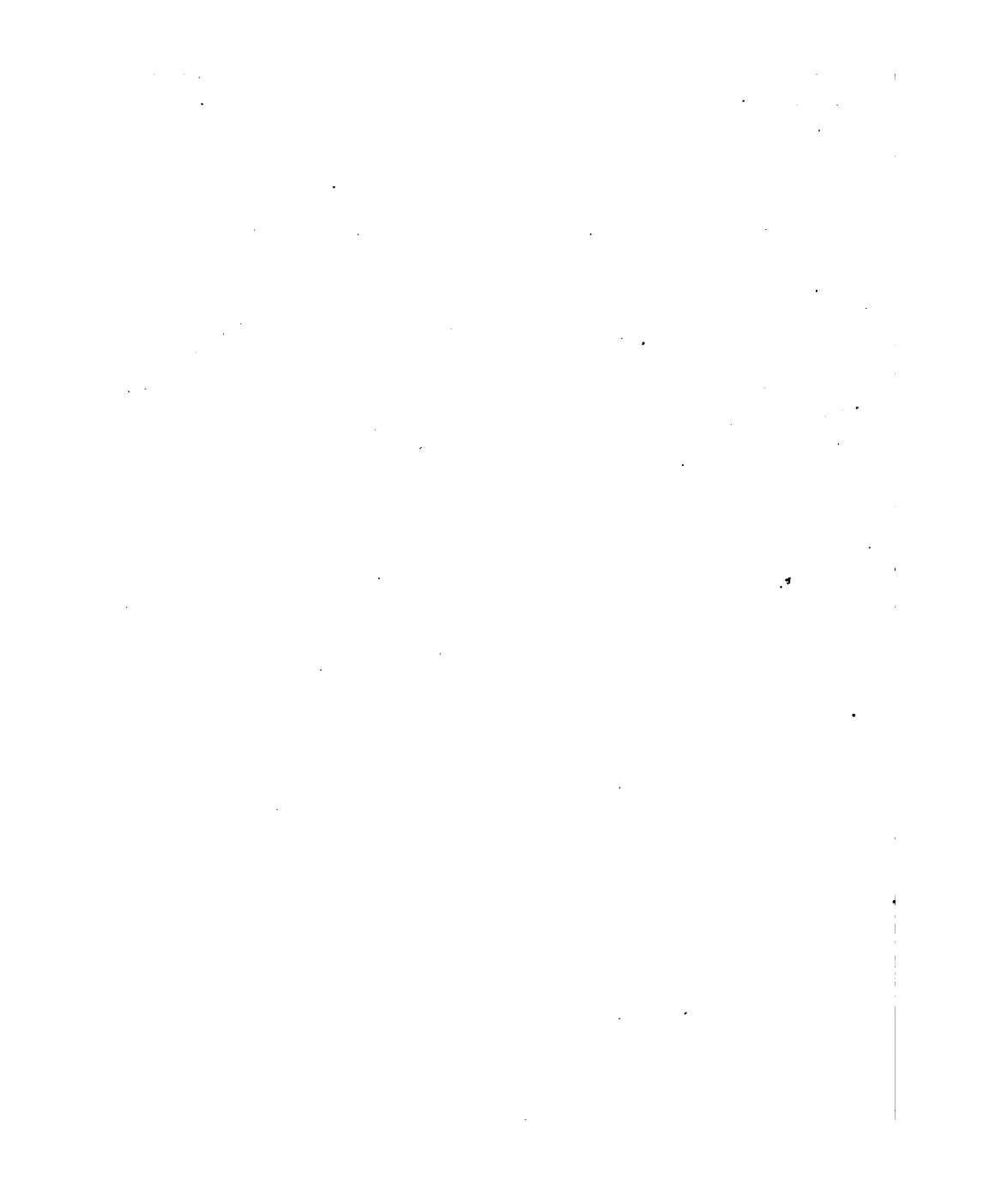
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